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ABSTRACT

Thirteen marginal Philippine communities were examined in an ethnographic study of the meaning of functional literacy and whether literacy invariably promotes development. The 13 sites were purposely selected to provide a broad sampling from three standpoints: (1) major livelihood and form of economic activity (farming, fishing, urban poor, disaster areas); (2) ethnolinguistic grouping (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao); and (3) lifestyle or rhythm of life in the community (traditional, transitional, Moslem Filipino minority, lowland Christian majority, urban poor, developmental). The sample functional literacy rate in the study's communities ranged from 34.4% to 79.8%. Special attention was paid to the following topics: community life as a context of literacy practice; community knowledge and the passage to a literate tradition; different practices, meanings, and definitions of functional literacy in different contents; constraints in the relationship between literacy and development; and possibilities for literacy in conceptualizing a school of the people. The study demonstrated that the concepts of literacy and numeracy cannot be separated from their social and cultural settings and that standard measures of literacy used in industrialized countries are often inappropriate in other nations. (Eleven tables/figures are included. The report contains 41 references. Appended is information about the quantitative method and data analysis.) (MN)

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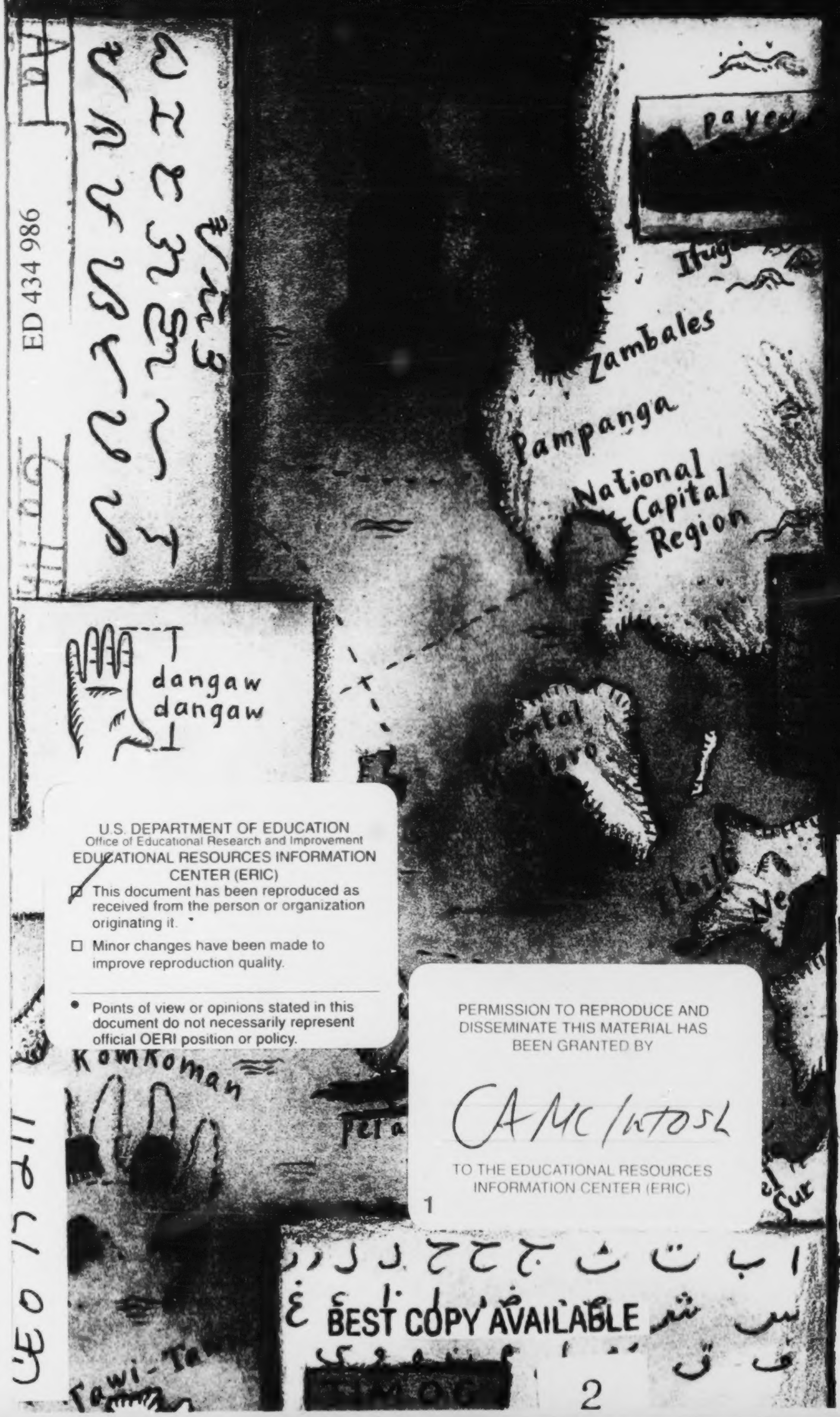
LANDSCAPES OF LITERACY

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY IN MARGINAL PHILIPPINE COMMUNITIES

MARIA LUISA CANIESO DORONILA

ED 434 986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LANDSCAPES OF LITERACY

An Ethnographic Study of Functional Literacy in Marginal Philippine Communities

MARIA LUISA CANIESO-DORONILA

UNESCO Institute For Education

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For Cirilo E. Doronila, Philip, Vincent, Greg and Rina

For the late Leonardo dela Cruz, UNESCO and Philippine civil servant

For all those who are willing to be transformed by the voices of "non-literates"

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Author's Note

THIS BOOK ASSEMBLES AND INTERPRETS a diverse range of the data and reports from 13 marginal communities in the Philippines, prepared by my colleagues in the research team who worked as team leaders in the sites. I wish to name them as the co-authors of this volume.

Team Leaders	*Research Sites (Provinces)*
Jasmin Espiritu Acuña (also the statistician for this project)	National Capital Region
Julian Abuso	Pampanga
Wilfredo Alangui	Ifugao
Nestor Balmores	Zambales
Florangel Rosario-Braid	Quezon and Rizal
Emma Santos-Castillo	Oriental Mindoro
Benjamin A. Han	Tawi-Tawi
Eleanor Eme E. Hermosa	Sorsogon
Nagasura T. Madale	Lanao del Sur
Alicia P. Magos	Iloilo and Negros Occidental
Catalino T. Rivera	Bulacan
Ramon R. Tuazon	Quezon and Rizal

Foreword

THE PRESENT BOOK, WHICH OBTAINED the 1994 International Literacy Research Award of UNESCO, is a unique contribution to our understanding of the dynamic and of the contradictory relations between literacy and development. This study of the social meanings of literacy in different Philippine communities provides a renewed approach to literacy research and challenges the traditional mapping of literacy competencies.

Ms Doronila's work sets out to assess the impact of literacy education but, in doing so, avoids the pitfalls of the classic linear evaluation of narrowly defined objectives. It offers a critical scrutiny of the meanings of present literacy programmes for people at the grassroots. This study gives evidence of the reproduction of inequalities at work in such programmes, but rejects, both theoretically and in practice, any necessity in such a trend. It recognizes the adult communities as actors or agencies able to renegotiate the educational demands, to resist, to choose, to transform. The author and her team never stop looking for possibilities in the observed contradictions.

This multidimensional research is intensely sensitive to the cultural dimensions of literacy programmes with regard to local and oral cultures and mother tongues, but it also encompasses the socioeconomic dimensions. It seeks to show how better numeracy and written communication can improve the economic conditions of local communities. It brings to the forefront the issue of the right to learn of women and men, but it is also attentive to the instrumental role of such actions and explores in a creative manner the context where the objectives of efficiency and equity converge and where they conflict. It sees educational programmes as a mirror of societies but also as possible "*lieux de changement*".

This new orientation in educational research is much needed. This "language of possibilities" is so refreshing, so far away from the still prevailing linear approach based on the simple and simplistic verification of a thesis, be it functional or critical. This book is the sign of a new trend in literacy research: a tendency towards a creative and professional radicality.

On behalf of the literacy practitioners and of the researchers in the different regions of the world, we thank Maria Luisa Doronila and all the people she has creatively involved in this reflective adventure, and we congratulate her on this award.

Such an international competition, open to researchers in all the regions of the world across the linguistic and disciplinary boundaries and offering a substantial bursary and the publication of the manuscript in three languages, required a broad-minded sponsor. We thank the Canadian Literacy Secretariat and its parent ministry, Human Resources Development of Canada, for their generosity and their farsightedness.

Paul Bélanger
Director
UNESCO Institute for Education

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A WORK OF SOME MAGNITUDE is never really the work of a single person or group. In this spirit, I wish to acknowledge several groups and individuals who have contributed to the realisation of this work:

The community folk in our research sites as well as all those with whom I have associated in almost 15 years of NGO work, who shared with me their wisdom and practicality learned from lives lived in difficulty but with boundless hope and basic human decency.

The Literacy Coordinating Council of the Philippines which funded this research project, Ricardo Gloria and Armand V. Fabella, secretary and immediate past secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports; Emil Q. Javier and Jose V. Abueva, president and immediate past president of the University of the Philippines; Undersecretary of Education Erlinda Pefianco, Magdalena Dugenia, Rosa F. Sese, Leonard Tabarranza, and all the personnel of the Bureau of Non-Formal Education who facilitated our work in the various sites. Some parts of this volume (chapters I and V) were originally part of the research report submitted to the Literacy Coordinating Council of the Philippines, for which permission to use is gratefully acknowledged.

The presidents, chancellors and directors of the universities and other agencies for allowing their faculty to participate as team leaders and members of the project.

Education Forum, NGO in education, particularly Diego G. Quejada II, director, and all its personnel and support groups in whose pioneering work in Philippine education I have been privileged to participate for more than a decade.

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The Governing Board of UIE, the Department of Human Resources and Labour in Canada, and UNESCO for the research award that made this book possible.

Finally, my husband Cirilo, our children and extended family for their loving forbearance and unconditional support through all the passages of my life.

My greatest intellectual debt is to Paulo Freire, only occasionally mentioned in this book, whose ideas on education and liberation have so suffused my thought that I now consider them mine as well.

Having acknowledged all those who have helped realize this project, I assume responsibility for all its errors and weaknesses in conceptualization, interpretation and conclusions.

Maria Luisa Canieso-Doronila
Quezon City, February 1996

CHAPTER I

Introduction

THE 1989 FUNCTIONAL LITERACY, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) established the national basic or rudimentary illiteracy rate at 10.2 percent or about 6 million of the Philippine population, and the functional illiteracy rate at 26.8 percent or 13 million of the population 10 years old or above. The national aggregate figure for functional literacy is based on an 11-item test of literacy skills from which a person is considered functionally literate if he answered correctly at least four of the 9 questions on reading, writing and reasoning, and at least one of two questions on numeracy. The functional literacy rate per province is computed as the proportion of persons who gave at least five correct answers to the total number of persons actually tested in the province.

Provided that all the conventions of survey research are rigorously applied, these statistics may give a quick index of the literacy situation useful to demographers, national planners and policy makers.

But what can these figures mean to literacy researchers and practitioners?

Apart from the general problem of the large figures on basic and functional illiteracy in a country whose educational enterprise ranks 16th worldwide in size, three practical problems with the use of a single literacy measure have been crystallized from our long years of experience in actual literacy work with different sectors of the Philippine population (e.g. tribals, farmers, urban poor, women), and years of study and research on Philippine education in general.

Problems in the Use of a Single Literacy Measure

The first problem has to do with the correctness of simply transporting to the Philippines the methods of teaching, studying and measuring literacy developed in Western industrialized societies where the predominant evaluation method is to administer large-scale literacy test questionnaires to establish competency levels of the population. This method assumes, among others, the individualistic ethic of Western cultures and the relative homogeneity of the population in terms at least of general lifestyle, access to good basic education and other social services. Thus, it makes sense to test, for example, each individual's ability to read a bus ticket or to figure out interest rates since it may be correct to assume that everyone has acquired some basic skill in the fundamental math operations, and has had the experience of riding a bus or transacting business with a bank.

What happens if such a test survey were administered to a population like the Philippines characterized by disparities in income and educational opportunity, cultural and linguistic diversity, and unevenness in the provision of social services including health and education? What, in fact, does a 26.8% functional illiteracy rate in the Philippines mean?

The second problem has to do with the view, held in various sectors, that on account of its historical evolution rooted in our colonial history, the Philippine school has long been alienated from its community to the point of being quite irrelevant to the actual rhythm and life of that community. One offshoot of such alienation is the virtual denial of community knowledge born out of actual and daily social practice, even as new categories of knowledge derived from textbook (Western) knowledge are used to distinguish, for example, between the literate and the non-literate.

Consider these two examples from our experience and research:

> In the course of trying out an approach to teaching basic numeracy to some tribal Filipinos, we discovered that our initial notion that they were not numerate (in the sense of not having a concept of numbers) was incorrect. As gatherers and sellers of *yantok* (rattan, a woody vine for making furniture), they sold these in small bundles of 50 strips each, which in turn were tied into large bundles of twenty (1,000 strips).
>
> We happened to ask: "Do you ever make a mistake in counting these strips?" The answer was "*No*", whereupon they proceeded to demonstrate why they didn't make mistakes:

> Putting their palms together (10 fingers) they clapped 5 times (50). Then, clapping twice (20), they got the number for the big bundle (50 x 20 = 1,000 strips) or 20 bundles of 50 strips each.
>
> Certainly they had the concept of number (up to at least 1,000); what they didn't have was the technology of writing Arabic numerals.

Our schools deny this knowledge and do not validate its correctness by using it as the basis for understanding multiplication. What they do is to teach 10 x 5 through the multiplication tables, or 10 + 10+ 10 + 10 + 10 as repeated addition in the abstract, thereby violating the pedagogical principle of starting where students are and removing the functionality of multiplication from the actual activities of community life.

A second example is drawn from the present research. In all the communities studied, the field researchers noted that computation (whether oral or mental) was a widespread skill especially for those doing transactions in the market. In particular, it is reported that across all communities, giving exact change involves the following operation which we have termed "adding on":

> If the cost of the item is P10.50 and the buyer gives a P20.00 bill, the seller counts exact change by saying aloud ten-fifty, then (giving 50 centavos), eleven (giving the bills), twelve, thirteen up to twenty.
>
> In school, by contrast, the way to do it is:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{P } 20.00 \\ -\ 10.50 \\ \hline \text{P } 9.50 \end{array}$$

The school, by ignoring the "adding on" method because it is "wrong", denies this knowledge and renders it invalid, without value. The computation by the school method is written; the "adding on" method is oral. Thus, when asked in this study what they retained from school mathematics, only a small number said they have retained the computational skill, it being accepted that this is the valid method which, alas, has been forgotten. In the 1989 international study of mathematics knowledge across 20 countries (Postlethwaite, 1992), Filipino public schoolchildren (Grades 5 and 6) ranked second from the lowest. Yet, commercial transactions go on in the market where no serious problems of computation are reported.

Beyond these differences in the method of figuring out exact change is a difference in the conception of the whole and its parts. The "school" method conceives of a whole from which a part is taken (P10.50) and one is then left with a remainder (P9.50).

Apart from its applicability to oral computation, the "adding-on" method is clearly rooted in the reality of an exchange situation in which what one takes from the whole (P10.50) is not conceived as lost; it has simply been transformed into an item (in exchange for the money). Therefore, to this item must be added the rest of the money to make the whole (P20.00) again.

The foregoing examples are not intended as a brief for the glorification of traditional and community knowledge for its own sake, or to justify its retention *in toto*; it is to propose that it be neither ignored nor denied, but treated in the way all knowledge should be treated — as the proper objects of analysis and critique, to be adopted or rejected according to its significance and functionality.

The third problem has to do with the usual assumption that literacy is a good in itself, that it promotes development, and is its own motivation for attending literacy classes. Yet, in the Philippines, as elsewhere reported, while individuals will affirm their interest in learning to read and write, all sorts of good reasons are given for irregular attendance or inability to participate in literacy training. Well-meaning individuals and groups interested in organizing literacy classes are constantly baffled by this contradiction.

One clue to the understanding of this problem is suggested by the complaint of a frustrated professor who wanted to do her bit for the eradication of illiteracy but could not, for lack of students:

> We only wanted to teach them literacy but they asked us to provide piglets to raise as well.

A radical difference from this point of view, as reported in the present study, is that of a farmer being interviewed about literacy skills who said:

> It is better to talk about rice because this is what is most important to farmers.

Given these practical problems in the Philippine context, it seems quite obvious that the understanding of functional literacy for academic and educational purposes cannot be reduced to the technical question of determining ability to read, write and count, as though these skills were autonomous of the contexts in which they are to be used. Rather, as B. V. Street (in Wagner, 1987) has proposed, the principal considerations must be in the specific social practices of reading, writing and counting, in the social institutions (such as the market) in which activities requiring literate practice take place, in the social distribution of literacy skills among the population according to some relevant variable such as income class, age group, occupation or gender. As Jack Goody (1968) has suggested, we need:

> to analyze in detail the uses made of writing in a particular social setting, to approach the question not so much from the standpoint of the literacy scholar, but (that) of the fieldworker with experience of the concrete context of oral and written communication.

In the Philippine context, these considerations have particular applicability because disparities in income and educational opportunity, cultural and linguistic diversity, unevenness in the provision of social services and the archipelagic nature of the country have resulted in a largely heterogeneous population.

Marginal Community Types in the Philippines

A brief sketch will suffice to suggest the heterogeneity of Philippine life even in the marginalized communities where the present study was made, keeping in mind that regardless of other considerations, the common characteristic of these communities is the fact of their marginality with average incomes below the poverty threshold.

On the other hand, important differences among them could be accounted for by variations in major livelihood-economic activity, ethnolinguistic groupings, majority-minority relations, and general lifestyle or rhythm of life in the community.

The first three Philippine community types according to major economic activity (fishing, farming, urban poor) correspond to the most marginalized and disadvantaged sectors in the country. Current statistics based on the 1991 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES Official Survey) show that .72 million families (six members average) or 8% of the total population of poor families are in Metro Manila, living below the poverty threshold set at P5,831.49 monthly (US$209.76). In the rural areas (provinces), 8.26 million families or 91% of the total population of poor families live below the poverty threshold set at P5496.70 (US$ 192.72). In all, 8.98 million families (77.12%) live below the poverty threshold, out of a total of 10.7 million families in the Philippines.

A fourth and new category of marginalized communities is the refugee/ resettlement type such as those more or less permanently affected by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. Less permanent are evacuation centres for victims of other natural and man-made calamities such as minor volcanic eruptions, floods, typhoons, hamletting of populations due to military-rebel operations.

The Philippine population of 65 million is divided into more than 80 ethnolinguistic groups of which the eight major ethnolinguistic groups have populations ranging from 159,000 to 2.5 million households (Philippine Almanac, 1990). Urban poor groups, on the other hand, are generally multi-ethnic. The principal characteristics of these ethnolinguistic groups are: 1) a distinct language (however, all belonging to the Malayo-Polynesian linguistic family), and 2) occupancy of a distinct territory, region or province. In the case of the Moslem Filipinos in the Southern Philippines, a further distinction is between the Christian majority and the Moslem minority. The archipelagic nature of the country composed of 7,100 islands accentuates these distinctions, accounting, in part, for the regionalistic orientation of the population.

However, on account of the mass media, the constitutionally mandated national language, Filipino, generally based on Tagalog, has also become the lingua franca. The use of English in the formal education system since 1903 (American colonial period) has made it the language both of status and privilege, and remains the major language for government, the courts, higher education, business and most of mass media. In the Moslem areas, the local languages are written (in Romanized script) and widely used in oral communication, but Arabic is the written language of the *madaris* (traditional Moslem community schools). Filipino tribal groups have their own languages (some not yet written), and those with access to mass media and the market need to understand and speak at least one other language (the dominant regional language) as well as Filipino and a smattering of English.

The language situation as defined above has important implications for the literacy program of the country, and has led to a number of relevant issues for literacy, as will be pointed out in a later section.

A third source of variation among marginal Philippine communities would be differences in "lifestyle", of which six types are identified — from traditional or "whole" cultures to organized communities practising a relatively modern version of participatory democracy. This preliminary typology was originally constructed for this study and is being tested for its adequacy as a framework for the study and classification of marginal Philippine communities.

The first type refers to communities whose traditional cultures are relatively "whole" cultures characterized by the integration of all or most of the patterns of cultural life. In this community type, life is communal and governed by tradition whose meanings remain accessible to all. Thus, in expressing an objection to one research instrument in this study that would elicit a compendium of community knowledge, the research team leader for the sea nomads of Tawi-Tawi commented:

> Indigenous knowledge and the compendium of folk beliefs, tradition and others should have been done through a more anthropological rather than by sociological means. Listing or recording songs outside of the socio-cultural context where they are expressed tends to be superficial if not a waste of time.

This appears to be a correct view as checked out from the questionnaires where the respondent sea nomads did not or could not single out specific beliefs or traditions, because for them, traditional culture is a seamless cloth where all or most parts fit. This view, if correct, has important implications for the introduction of literacy programs, to be discussed in a later section.

The second community type by "lifestyle" is termed "transitional", of which two types are represented. The tribal community of this type has some relations with the market and with the lowland majority, as well as limited exposure to mass media and education. Yet significant aspects of traditional culture are observed through the healers and the *babaylan* (shamans), even as the younger generations exhibit some doubts or anxiety about these practices. The other type (refugee and resettlement) are uprooted communities for whom, in the case of the victims of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, there is no possibility of turning back at least in the immediate future. Yet, as given in the site reports, in the refugee community, adults were observed to keep on returning to what was once the site of their homes, some of them even cleaning up the presumed premises perhaps as a coping mechanism under stressful conditions.

The third type is the Moslem Filipino minority community which is distinguished by the fact of its minority, both in status (in terms of population, access to national resources, etc.) and religion (the Philippines is 85% Christian). The still festering Moro separatist rebellion under the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is a manifestation of the demands of this group. In culture and orientation, these communities have a pronounced Islamic character, even as distinctions among the three Moslem ethnic groups (Maranao, Maguindanao and Tausug) remain.

The fourth type is the lowland Christian majority which has had the longest exposure to Spanish and American influences as well as to government, mass media and urban life. They have evolved a lifestyle incorporating these elements into the traditional culture. The fact of being part of the majority population yet at the same time being marginal to it presents its own set of problems, as will be discussed later.

The fifth type is the urban poor, a multi-ethnic community grouping of heavily marginalized people ("squatters") living on the edge of the more affluent urban communities where they work as service workers (laundry women, plumbers) or small vendors. In the National Capital Region (NCR), urban poor groups comprise 33% of the total NCR population of about 8 million. In constant threat of demolition of their houses which is the defining characteristic of their lives, some groups try very hard to become "invisible", or alternatively to organize themselves in order to own the land on which they live.

The sixth type is the "developmental" type in which some form of participatory democracy, however limited, has been developed among members of a community as an organized group, usually through and with the help of non-government organization (NGOs) and other development-oriented groups. Some aspects of the lifestyle of these groups have changed, notably, as shown in this study, in new forms of social participation, mobilization and communication processes.

Thus, in addition to the common fact of the marginality of all the communities, the category sets described above delineate the bases of our analysis of the findings from the research sites: 1) the community activities and related problems, 2) the ethnolinguistic and religious situation, and 3) the general "lifestyle" or rhythm of life in the communities, all of which are conceived to have major implications for the understanding of functional literacy in the Philippine setting, and for the design of functional literacy programs.

Objectives of the Research Program

All these considered, the design and delivery of adult functional literacy programs need much more information than those which the traditional literacy mapping could provide. Thus, in 1993, it was decided by the Literacy Coordinating Council of the Philippines (LCC) in collaboration with the Bureau of Non-Formal Education under the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS–BNFE) that a research program should be undertaken towards the improvement of the design and delivery of its literacy and continuing education programs nationwide.

In general terms, the lobjectives of this research program are:

1. To explore the general issues and problems leading to a clearer understanding and conceptualization of functional literacy in the Philippines
2. To understand the nature of community life in various Philippine community types in order to contextualize the functional literacy programs
3. To propose content areas for the development of these functional literacy programs as well as the relevant instructional materials;

4. To provide some empirical bases for the technical considerations related to the teaching and evaluation of functional literacy, acquisition, retention and loss of literacy skills; and
5. To propose a general framework for the planning, implementation and sustainability of functional literacy programs.

In keeping with these objectives, this book is divided into 7 parts. Chapters I and II elaborate the problem and objectives of the study, as well as its theoretical and methodological framework. After the ethnographic sketches of the communities included in this study to represent the six Philippine marginal community types (chapter III), the main themes delineating the contexts and constraints of literacy as found in these community types are presented (chapters IV, V and VI). Chapter VII presents the general conclusions of the study as well as an explanation of the possibilities for literacy in a community-based literacy and education program specific to the Philippines and similarly situated countries. A brief note on further research questions is also included in the final chapter.

CHAPTER II

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

ON THE BASIS OF the preceding discussion as well as from a review of the literature, the principal problems addressed by this study may now be stated:

1. If a single measure of literacy is not adequate for an understanding of the literacy situation in a country such as the Philippines, what principal considerations will contribute to such an understanding and how may these be systematically studied?
2. What is the nature of the relation between literacy and development? If development cannot be assumed as the logical consequence of literacy, what kinds of constraints operate on this relation and how may these be systematically studied?

The first problem focuses on the context of literacy; the second on the constraints defining the relation between literacy and development. In a comprehensive review of the current literature on literacy, Wagner (1987) has pointed out five general problems: 1) the problem of definition, 2) the problem of literacy acquisition, 3) the problem of retention, 4) the problem of individual consequences, and 5) the problem of social consequences. It is our view that these problems cannot be studied as discrete issues; they need to be contextualized in a particular situation in order to study their interrelations. Insofar as consequences are concerned, rather than considering causal relations of literacy to individual and social development, it might be more useful to render as problematic the whole relation between literacy and development by studying the constraints to this relation. In the

Philippine context, this question is especially meaningful given the finding in Anderson and Bowman (1965) that the Philippines showed negative correlation between literacy and economic growth.

The two major research problems we have raised summarize and expand the five problems identified by Wagner, placing them in the context of the practical problems given in chapter 1, with respect to the Philippine situation, In this way, the research findings related to these five problems are not only of theoretical and academic interest but also useful guides to the understanding and improvement of functional literacy and basic education programs in the Philippines and similarly situated countries.

We begin by stipulating that instead of postulating hypotheses for which there is as yet no adequate basis, we identify the research themes under each of these two principal problems in order to acquire some systematic and comprehensive understanding, however preliminary, of the literacy situation in the Philippines.

For the first problem, it is proposed that a single measure is inadequate for the understanding and definition of literacy because we need to consider three underlying elements which together define the literacy context: 1) the differences in the nature of community life across different Philippine community types, 2) the differences in the meanings, functions and extent of literacy practice across communities, and 3) the nature of the relation between community knowledge and literacy practice across these communities. What is being proposed is to study literacy practice in its cultural context in which "social formations, everyday life and representational practices [i.e. community, a whole way of life and maps of meaning" (Grossberg, 1994)] play an important part.

For the second problem, it is proposed that in order to explore the constraints in this relation between literacy and development, we need to understand 1) the reasons for the retention and loss of literacy skills (once learned), as well as the phenomenon of individuals who acquire literacy on their own, 2) the reasons for the sustainability or non-sustainability of adult literacy programs, and 3) the relation between literacy practice and development processes in the community.

In general, the first problem focuses on the contexts of literacy; the second deals with the constraints in its relation to development.

In this study, we explore the six considerations given above as themes rather than as formal propositions because of the inadequacy of present knowledge and research in these areas, which fails to consider the perspective of the community folk themselves for whom rice and pigs, as it were, are of primary importance beyond the fact of simply becoming literate. Thus, we have situated the study of functional literacy in the marginalized communities of the country where we propose to interrogate the meanings and functions of literacy to people's lives.

Definition of Functional Literacy as Social Practice

The problem of definition lies at the root of the current debate on the study and evaluation of functional literacy. In this discussion, we set aside the question of basic literacy and numeracy whose definitions are fairly universal, straightforward and immediately operational:

> Basic literacy is defined as "the ability to pronounce and write the alphabet, read and write words and simple paragraphs, and comprehend simple reading materials."
>
> (*Education Forum Basic Literacy-Numeracy Manual*, 1993)

> Basic numeracy is defined as "the ability to count orally, understand place value, write numerals, do the four fundamental operations, count money and use common standards of measurement."
>
> (*Education Forum Basic Literacy-Numeracy Manual*, 1993)

Given these definitions, an evaluation measure could be devised for general use without too much regard for context specificity, provided that the content of the test items is familiar to examinees.

Where literacy is conceptualized as "a continuum of abilities and concepts within which it is possible to locate individuals according to some generally accepted set of standards or levels" (UNESCO definition, 1957), the requirements are for the specification of this single measure (the "continuum") along which standards or levels could be plotted, and used as a criterion for individual competencies.

Several criticisms of this view have been put forward, among which are: 1) the reduction of functional literacy to a technical conception which "oversimplifies and distorts social reality by ignoring the dynamics and complexities of the human context and the intersubjective world" (Kassam and Masisi, 1976), and 2) the imposition by scholars and evaluators of their own "standards of procedure, classification and interpretation", without possibility for "negotiation of meaning, value or power" (Hautecoeur, 1990).

Two recent studies on the use of a single measure of assessing literacy levels will suffice to elaborate on these objections. Colin Lankshear's (1993) relevant criticisms of the Adult Performance Level Study (APL, 1975) centre on its assumptions 1) of functional literacy as a passive and negative state ("to be not unable to cope with the most minimal routines and procedures of mainstream existence"), 2) that a few experts can determine what people need to know in order that they would be "functional", 3) that those who are found to be functionally illiterate according to this measure are deviants from the norms inherent in a "good and well-ordered society" and must therefore be made literate in order to be incorporated into the mainstream.

Along this point, Rosie Wickert in her study of literacy in Australia (*No Single Measure*, 1989) concludes that literacy assessment should not only identify what people can't do but also what they can do or need to do for specific purposes and contexts. In addition, she reports that results of her survey of a nationwide sample of literacy teachers, tutors and organizers in Australia show that "with very few exceptions, respondents indicated 1) that it is inappropriate or impossible to identify a standard upper or lower limit of literacy ability; and 2) that literacy ability must be described in terms of purposeful tasks within a particular society, thus the relevance of the social context in which literacy occurs."

Contexts of Literacy

Community Life as a Context of Literacy Practice

Where literacy is conceptualized as context-specific, it becomes necessary to locate its practice in the rhythm of community life itself: 1) in the nature of the relations among community members and therefore the ties that bind them as a community, 2) the community activities pursued, and 3) the processes of continuity or change that characterize the life of the community.

As we have earlier proposed, marginal communities in the Philippines vary according to these characteristics. Six Philippine community types have been broadly described in chapter 1, and are used in this study as the framework for the analysis of the context-specificity of literacy practice across marginal communities.

Meanings, Functions and Extent of Literacy Practice

Where literacy is conceptualized as social practice, as in the present study, it becomes necessary to begin from a conception of "practice". The best definition which we have encountered thus far has been suggested by Scribner and Cole (1978): "A practice may be considered to be the carrying out of goal-directed activities, using particular technologies and applying particular systems of knowledge." This definition ties in with the theoretical approach derived from Vygotsky, to be presented in a later section.

From this definition, we operationalize practice into three interrelated elements assumed to operate not only at the level of the individual but, more important, at the level of the group or the community: 1) the set of activities; 2) the technology involved (e.g. a mechanical, electrical, electronic or related equipment such as a weighing scale, or a process such as rice milling; and 3) the knowledge which guides and gives meaning to both, where knowledge is conceived to include facts, norms, skills and values. In each of these three elements, the application of literate and numerate skills (in the sense of reading, writing, computing and measurement) is a matter of empirical observation, particularly in a situation like the Philippines where a whole range of community types exists: from oral, to mainly oral, with some practices carried out in writing, to communities with a predominantly written tradition. We need to reiterate at this point the salience of the activity itself (e.g., rice milling, vending in the market) in the investigation, and secondarily on how literacy enters or does not enter into these activities, to the point where it becomes or does not become part of the practice.

From this conceptualization, it is then possible 1) to locate or contextualize the domains of literacy and oracy practice within a given community, 2) specify who are unable to enter the domain of literate practice because they do not have the required knowledge for it (e.g. cannot read a weighing scale), 3) investigate the distribution of the required knowledge in the population by age, sex, income, occupation or other variables, 4) identify the alternatives people invent or use where either the technology or the knowledge of literacy are not available, and 5) anticipate the new literacy skills that need to be learned as preparation for the coming of new technology in the context, for example, of local or national development plans.

Community Knowledge as Context of Literate Practice

Without going into the philosophical question of knowledge, which is beyond the scope of this study, knowledge is here defined as "the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics." This is as true of the man in the street as it is with anyone else. The definition makes no specific distinction between cognitive, evaluative and affective aspects (Berger and Luckmann, 1969).

In more formal terms, Etzioni (1968) has defined knowledge as a set of symbols that serves two functions: 1) it provides a relation to reality by containing information about the social and non-social environment, other actors and the actor himself; and 2) it provides meaning, an important bond that ties actions and actors together. Meaning is derived by interpreting facts cognitively and by evaluating them in cognitive and affective terms. Defined in this way, knowledge includes not only factual statements but practices norms, attitudes, values, beliefs and general perspectives or world views as well.

In this study, community knowledge is defined as the stock of facts, norms, attitudes, values, beliefs and general perspectives or world views available to and developed by people in the area, in the context of their daily lives. In the Philippine context, such knowledge is here conceptualized as of two types: 1) literate knowledge generally learned in school, from printed material or requiring some form of reading or writing, and 2) traditional knowledge derived mainly from an oral tradition and consisting mainly of practices beliefs, norms, attitudes, values and world views. The latter set of knowledge is organized in this study according to the life-cycle. The term, indigenous knowledge, is consciously avoided here because our focus is not on the "different" or the exotic but on the practical everyday knowledge of people.

As in the previous conceptualization of the other contexts of literacy practice, the critical point of investigation is the function of community knowledge in community life and activities, and then the extent to which literate practice enters or does not enter into the use, reproduction, modification and expansion of that knowledge.

Constraints in the Relation of Literacy and Development

In this section, we focus on three considerations as preliminary bases for the systematic understanding of the constraints underlying the relation between literacy and development in the Philippine context: 1) the retention, loss and acquisition of literacy, 2) the reasons for sustainability or non-sustainability of adult literacy programs, and 3) the relation between literacy practice and development processes, if any, in the community. In rendering the relation between literacy and development as problematic rather than given, we focus on constraints to this relation as a more economical way of understanding this relation.

Retention, Loss and Acquisition of Literacy

One possible constraint to this relation might be the conditions under which literacy skills, once learned, are retained or lost. In the Philippines, literacy training is lodged within the formal elementary education sector. While participation rates are high at Grade 1 (99%), drop-out rates are equally high, peaking at Grade 4 when 56% of the school population leave school. It is reported that eventually most of these drop-outs slide back to semi-illiteracy. (We note here the possible discrepancy between the reported basic literacy rate of 89.2% and the above datum, but we set this aside as a question for census takers and statisticians.)

The problems for literacy and development are therefore on the conditions under which literacy skills (once learned in formal school) are either retained or lost, and whether or not these skills are further developed and expanded to the point where they become functional for community life.

Here the questions of motivation, the language of literacy instruction, the approaches used in formal literacy instruction, and the relation between skills learned in the formal school and those required for community life become important.

The contrasting examples of individuals who acquired literacy on their own and continue to use and expand their skills in the context of their life-activities serve as good bases for comparative analysis with respect to the questions raised above.

Sustainability of Non-Formal Adult Literacy Programs

The Education for All (EFA) program envisions the "eradication of illiteracy" in the year 2000. Yet, after several decades of international attention and huge investments in literacy programs both in the non-formal and formal education sectors, the actual number of illiterates continues to grow dramatically, compounded not only by population growth but also by loss of literacy skills in individuals, and the ghosts of non-formal adult literacy programs long dead or dying.

Certainly, one problem for non-formal adult literacy programs is their sustainability but we prefer to view this problem at a more general level. In this study, we conceptualize this problem as a constraint in the relation between literacy and development because we need to understand first of all how literacy and its practice can (or cannot) reproduce, maintain and expand itself in the context of community life, and whether or not the nature of adult literacy programs contribute to this condition. There is no money in this world that can be found to sustain and indefinitely maintain literacy campaigns or even non-formal literacy programs for each and every adult who drops out of school at an early age. Therefore the problem for development is precisely on the maintenance and expansion of literate practice to the point where it becomes part of community practices and community life, a literate tradition, as it were. Obviously, this problem is even more acute in underdeveloped countries like the Philippines where drop-out rates are exceedingly high and resources are minuscule.

In this study, we examine the record of performance of non-formal adult literacy programs whenever they are found in the communities, and compare them with communities where there are none of these programs but where education for the people goes on. The specific question, as mentioned earlier, is the contribution of the non-formal adult literacy programs to the reproduction, maintenance and expansion of literacy and its practice, its incorporation in the rhythm of life in the community.

Relation between Literacy Practice and Development Processes in the Community

If we adopt the stance that literacy is neither " a good in itself" or "a moral imperative", a study of functional literacy needs to be able to contribute to the understanding of what precisely is the relation between literacy practice and development processes.

In this study, we define development as follows:

> Development is here viewed as a process of human development, a process of social transformation in which man is both the subject and the object, and in which he participates at all levels of decision-making. Self-reliance is both a means and an end in this process. It is a process which starts with the release of creative energy of man, assumes equal access to and a rational use of resources by the poor and vulnerable groups, tends to eliminate the difference between mental and manual labour and uses the full range of technological choices available from other sources properly adapted. This kind of development is not only more humane but also represents a new man, nature, technology mix. In the participatory process which results in growth, human development and equity are not trade-offs. (Ponna Wignaraja, "Towards Praxis and Participatory Development." In *Participatory Development: Learning from South Asia.* Wignaraja et al. Tokyo: UN UP, 1991, p.195)

This definition of development is preferred because: 1) it places man/woman at the centre of development; 2) it assumes his/her creative and powerful potential to participate meaningfully in the entire development process; and 3) it recognizes that social change must start with how people themselves respond to the forces which constrain or encourage social transformation.

Given this definition, it is necessary to conceptualize both individual and group or community development as a process of human and social development towards self-reliance. realization of creative potential and participation of people at all levels of decision-making. These two processes must be understood in interactive relation, not separately, because the development of individuals in the direction of change and growth indicated by the definition does not occur outside of the context of social life; nor can social development occur without people's individual and collective responses to the forces which contribute to or constrain social transformation.

We may thus conceptualize individual development not only in terms of actual skills learned, but also changes in self-concept, further motivation to learn, acquisition of values related to empowerment (e.g., relation to authority, ability to take initiative, participation in community efforts) orientation to change (e.g. risk-taking), and adaptive capacity, among others. We may conceptualize social development in terms of social participation, sustainability of development projects including literacy training, capacity of the community especially the marginalized groups to get involved in and contribute to development efforts, development aspirations of people themselves, their capacity to articulate these and to participate in their realization.

In relation to the contribution of the acquisition of literacy skills and literate practice to these processes of development, we ask: What internal capacities for change and growth at the individual and group levels are generated by what types of literacy practice? Conversely, what social conditions need to be present in order that literacy practice can expand to create for individuals and groups the social space for development?

In this conceptualization, there is no attempt to establish a unilinear relation between literacy practice and development. We shall instead emphasize the interactive, dialectical relations between them, and on the conditions under which these relations are mutually constraining or reinforcing.

Theoretical Approaches

Two theoretical approaches to the scientific study of literacy have been proposed (Scribner, 1987). The older approach, the levels concept, is dominantly psychological, based on the concept of levels of organization. In this approach, all material entities and processes are viewed as being organized hierarchically in progressively more complex systems or levels of integration: the physical, the biological, the psychological and the social. Formidable problems are engendered by this conceptualization, particularly on the hierarchy of processes and the integration of the four levels, especially the psychological and the social. When these levels have been identified, it becomes possible to construct a "continuum" of literacy skills with specified levels.

Thus, while the concept is eminently grand and comprehensive, it has been proposed that to build up scientific knowledge towards the operationalization of the levels theory, it may be useful as a first step to study particular units or aspects of literacy rather than literacy in "general".

If this latter direction of research is correct, Scribner further proposes that it may then be more useful to use the second theoretical approach, the activity theory, because it allows us precisely to study literacy as particularized in various human activities or social practices. There is no attempt, at this point, to consider the relative advantages of these two theories. It is recognized that it is necessary to build scientific knowledge towards a more general level such as that conceived under the levels concept. The choice of the activity theory is occasioned by its applicability to the general objectives of this study as well as to the present state of knowledge in literacy research.

The theory of activity developed by scholars working in the theoretical tradition of Lev Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1984) holds that the integral units of human life (humans interacting with each other and with the world) can be conceptualized as activities serving to fulfil distinctive motives.

In the course of these broad activities, people engage in goal-directed actions, carried out for particular purposes under particular conditions and with particular technical means. Operations which make up these actions are typically mental and behavioural, and they vary with both subjective and objective conditions and means. Activities, actions and operations are held, according to this theory, as the structural units of human behaviour.

Considered in this light, it is possible to study literacy practice (in the sense of Scribner and Cole) as it enters into activities of individuals and groups, thus: 1) livelihood and economic activities such as fishing, farming and selling; 2) socio-cultural activities such as worship and festivals; 3) political-civic activities such as voting, participating in *barangay* (local political unit) or town assemblies, and implementing various civic projects.

In each of these activities, it is possible to study particular actions which are predominantly oral or written in modality (i.e., oracy practice vis-a-vis literacy practice), the social distribution of literacy across income, age, and gender groups, and the relation between literacy and development, as defined.

Methodology

In this section, we present an extended description of the methodology used incorporating 1) its theoretical bases, 2) the methodological assumptions, 3) the classification of research sites, and 4) details of the sampling plan and research procedures. The essential features of this methodology proceeded from the requirements of the theoretical approach used, the need to obtain a broad and comprehensive preliminary understanding of the literacy situation in marginal Philippine communities, as well as our concern to incorporate as much as possible the perspectives and meanings of the community folk themselves.

The decision to adopt an ethnographic model for carrying out this study stems from these concerns. In its conventional sense, however, the major problems associated with ethnography are the difficulty in making comparative analysis and the possibility that the ethnographer-researcher as his/her own instrument of data-gathering and analysis, may get lost in the complexities of real life and, lacking individual perceptiveness, s/he may end up with meaningless, impressionistic statements (Bhola, 1990).

In theoretical terms, this problem is brought about, among others, by the particular relation of the ethnographer to the object of his/her study. As P. Bourdieu (1977) points out, the ethnographer as observer, "excluded from the real play of social activities by the fact that s/he has no real place in the system, and without real need to make a place for him/herself in the system (tends to) reduce all social relations to communicative relations and more precisely to decoding operations."

One possible way to get out of or around this problem is to solicit the direct participation of the objects of study (e.g., primary groups in a community) in the actual conduct of some parts of the research, such that their own subjectivity as individuals, as well as their capacity to verbalize their own meanings, are recognized, utilized and valued.

In order to do this, it is necessary to situate the methodology of ethnographic research within a theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977) in which three modes of practical knowledge are recognized, corresponding to the three moments of the social process: externalization (through practice/activity/actions in situations, e.g., monocrop agricultural practices in large plantations); objectification (resulting in the construction of objective social structures and relations, e.g., property relations between landlords and tenants); and internalization (construction of structured dispositions functioning as the generative principles producing practice or actions in situations, e.g. the feudal mentality).

The theoretical knowledge corresponding to each of these three moments are called, respectively: phenomenological, objectivist and the dialectical relation between the objective structures and the structured dispositions or generative principles which in turn tend to reproduce both practice and objective structures (Bourdieu, 1977). As suggested by the specific examples given above, the relation among these three modes of theoretical knowledge is assumed to be integrative and interactive.

If correct, the methodology suggested by the above construction can include a participatory dialogical process in which the objects-subjects of study (e.g., community folk) can discuss and record in a semi-structured format, their practice in specific aspects of life, the meanings which they attach to this practice, and the contexts or structures in which both practice and meanings are situated. This method is explained more concretely under the section on research procedures.

Further checks on the conclusions and insights derived from the qualitative data could be made on the basis of quantitative measures whenever these are applicable.

Assumptions

Modifications made on the standard ethnographic techniques proceeded from three important assumptions, validated by our previous research and experience in the Philippine context. The most important, in our view, is that, regardless of whether they are literate or non-literate, people know what they want and need, and given adequate opportunity and motivation they have the capacity to articulate these. The extraction of meaning from these articulations is not alone the work of the researcher but part of the process of negotiation among the respondents themselves and between the respondents and the researcher.

Our second assumption has a cultural base: in the Philippine context where life is characterized by largely oral practice and intense social interaction, it makes sense to conduct group and participatory research. Community folk particularly in the marginalized areas are generally uncomfortable with individualized survey-type questionnaires whether oral and written, because of a general culture of silence brought about by long years of being outside the usual channels of public opinion ("What on earth do I have to say that would be of interest or importance to anybody?"), and partly from a belief that lack of formal education makes a person *mangmang* (ignorant).

In fact, the culture of silence (in the sense of Freire) is so pervasive among Philippine marginal groups that one of the best indicators of liberation and empowerment among organized marginal groups is that, as a condition for their participation, they request that they be furnished the final report of the research in which they were respondents. In this study, only the organized group (Corona) made this request, surely a validation of our second assumption.

Our third assumption is that the sustainability of a community education program is dependent on the extent to which it answers people's needs and aspirations as identified by the people themselves, and the extent to which they can "own" the education program. Thus, if research is the first step in the design of a community literacy program, that research must be conducted using procedures understood by and participated in by the people themselves.

Classification of Research Sites

For purposes of comparability, it was decided that a purposive sampling of marginal Philippine communities would be made, taking into consideration the important bases of difference across the groups: 1) the major livelihood-economic activity, 2) ethnolinguistic groupings, and 3) lifestyle or rhythm of life in the community. Tables 1–3 below summarize these classifications. Following the ethnographic convention, all community names are fictitious; province names are actual. Table 4 based on existing data using a simple functional literacy measure (Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey or FLEMMS, described in chapter 1) is presented here only to show the variations of FL rates across provinces in which the community research sites are situated.

Table 1: Classification of research sites by major economic activity

Farming	Fishing	Urban Poor	Disaster
Upland tribal swidden agriculture (Alaga) Upland tribal rice terracing agriculture (Kala) Hill monocrop sugar (Magdalena) Lowland Christian (Magayon, Calamansi, and Palihan)	Sea Nomads (Boheh Umos) Combination lake fishing/ farming (Taka) Lowland Christian fishing/ farming (Lapu-Lapu, Inipon, and Corona)	Urban Poor (Labasan and Martires)	(Mt. Pinatubo) Refugee (Sta. Rosa) Resettlement (Loob)

Table 2: Classification of research sites by geographic and ethnolinguistic distribution
Name of town or barangay (Ethnic group)
Province or Region

Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Kala (Ifugao) Ifugao	Alaga (Bukidnon) Iloilo	Taka (Maranao Moslem) Lanao Sur
Magayon (Bikol) Sorsogon	Magdalena (Ilonggo) Negros Occidental	Boheh Umos (Sama) Tawi-tawi
Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu (Tagalog) Mindoro Oriental		
Palihan (Tagalog) Bulacan		
Labasan and Martires (Multi-ethnic) National Capital Region		
Corona (Tagalog) Rizal		
Inipon (Tagalog) Quezon		
Sta. Rosa (Pampango) Pampanga		
Loob (Ita) Zambales		

Table 3: Classification of research sites by "lifestyle" or cultural life

Traditional	Transitional	Moslem Filipino Minority	Lowland Christian Majority	Urban Poor	Developmental
Boheh Umos (Sea Nomads)	Alaga (tribal) Kala (tribal) Sta. Rosa (refugee) Loob (resettlement)	Taka	Magayon Calamansi/ Lapu-Lapu Palihan Magdalena	Labasan and Martires	Corona Inipon

Table 4: Continuum of research sites (provinces) according to FLEMMS functional-literacy rate

Research Sites	Functional Literacy Rate
Tawi-tawi	34.4 %
Sorsogon	43.3 %
Ifugao	47.1 %
Oriental Mindoro	59.4 %
Negros Occidental	60.2 %
Pampanga	60.4 %
Lanao del Sur	62.3 %
NCR	62.3 %
Iloilo	63.8 %
Quezon (Aurora)	65.6 %
Zambales	66.9 %
Rizal	72.1 %
Bulacan	79.8 %

Sampling Plan and Research Procedures

On the bases of these considerations, the following participatory research procedures were used:

1. Group sampling plan: the unit of analysis was groups within each community, given that literacy is understood to be inherently social but with psychological roots and consequences. For the purpose of this study, a social group is defined as a natural social formation or community which has the following characteristics: a) they recognize themselves as a group bound together by similarity of livelihood or occupation or a common goal; membership in the same neighbourhood (*magkakapitbahay*), more or less the same socio-economic class (urban poor, etc.), and the same ethno-linguistic group (except for the urban poor communities in the study which are multi-ethnic); and relation by affinity or consanguinity; and b) they live in a more or less contiguous area allowing people within the group to have face-to-face relations with at least some other members of the group, and to have common activities in which some literacy practices are included.

   One or more of these characteristics must be present to justify inclusion in the samples of social groups to be studied in the community. The only exceptions are two communities in a refugee camp and a resettlement area after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, included here as special cases.

2. Preliminary information on the community were gathered from municipal and *barangay* (from *balanghay* or boat, basic political unit of local government) documents as well as from individual interviews with local, political, religious, school and civic leaders, and community folk.

3. Procedure for describing the contexts, definitions and practice of literacy and oracy. In addition to the standard ethnographic techniques, the procedure for identifying literacy practice across communities was simple and straightforward. More important, it allowed the community folk to directly participate in the research process which we believe is the

first step in the design of a functional literacy program that people could themselves manage and participate in.

The procedure was as follows:

> At a roundtable discussion of community folk first as a big group and then grouped by age level, sex and occupation, answers to Data Matrices (DM) 1–8, in this order, were discussed by the group and recorded by a participant. Both literates and neo-literates participated in this process. Each entry in the matrix represents the consensus of the group on the answers to the questions or information to be elicited. DM#1 is a documentation of major community activities classified horizontally into livelihood-economic, socio-cultural and political-civic aspects, and vertically by level of activity whether individual, family, or group. DM#2 documents the problems related to these activities; DM#3 documents the reading, writing, computation, measurement, and problem-solving skills or actions required by the major activities listed in each cell of DM#1. The question asked was simple: "What do you need to know or do in order to carry out activities in DM#1?"
>
> DM#1–3 have exactly the same format; DM#2 and 3 build on the information (community activities) given in DM#1, such that the information given in DM#2 and 3 could be understood as successive overlays on the principal question (major activities of community life). In this way, the focus of the data-gathering activity being done by the respondents is not lost.
>
> DM 4–7 are summaries of the distributions of activities and literacy skills by age, income and sex. DM#8 documents the extent of literacy and oracy practice in the community by determining the principal modality for each of the major community activities: 1) oral only, 2) read only, 3) written only, 4) counted/computed/measured, 5) could be oral and/or written.

This mode of data gathering and documentation by the people themselves stems from the assumption that literacy and oracy practice is culturally patterned with its own set of meanings as to acceptable or unacceptable practice.

Completed matrices of DMs 1–8 (done in large flaps) were reviewed by the respondents after each session. Where necessary, questions were asked and clarifications made by both respondents and researchers.

All these matrices were tried out earlier on two groups in a community not included in the study, and subsequently refined.

Further checks on the information from these matrices were done through observation on site (e.g., at the rice mill, in the village artesian well, etc.) by the field researchers, listing of reading materials found in various places (e.g., municipal hall, market, church, reading centre if any, post office, etc.) and spot-interviews. The information from the matrices and observations was then summarized in suitable tables for analysis.

It will be noted that the resulting documentation from this procedure contributes not only a new kind of "map" of the context, definitions and practice of literacy and oracy, but also and more important, it becomes a global type of needs assessment done by the people themselves. Equally important, since the data were gathered in semi-structured form, comparison across community types is greatly facilitated.

In many ways, this mode of data-gathering goes beyond the traditional concept of research procedure. It is a dialogical process of sharing, assessment, negotiation and consensus-building, eliciting from the respondents not only information based on prior knowledge but also encouraging the construction of new knowledge during the process of discussion. The researcher, apart from his/her format for the data matrices, does not come as an expert in "studied ignorance" to decode speech and behaviour in situations. S/he is there to facilitate the process of the communal and negotiated encoding of information and meanings by the subjects-objects of the research, on the assumption (given earlier) that with enough motivation and opportunity, people can articulate their own needs and the meanings of their life-activities.

When these instruments were tried out on a group of farmers none of whom had heard about, seen or used a data matrix before, a 60-year old farmer came to us to ask for a few minutes' break as he had a headache. When we asked if he found the task too difficult, he said, "No, I know all the answers, but I have never before thought about so many things all at once."

In this activity, the investigation of literacy practice by the community folk themselves is literate practice in itself.

4. Procedure for gathering community knowledge. The first instrument was an individual interview schedule asking a purposive sample of community folk of both sexes from all age and occupation groups to identify whom they considered to be the wise men and women in their community. The respondents were then asked to share their knowledge of stories, songs, proverbs, magic words, community beliefs and values; to indicate whether they believed and practised the above; and to state the reasons for their belief or nonbelief. Questions relating to practices in production, elections and other areas of life, such as childbirth, marriage etc., were also asked. The organization of these categories is according to the life cycle. The second half of the interview schedule posed questions regarding radio and TV programs, and reading materials most familiar to the respondents; specific activities which required them to use their literacy and numeracy skills; the units of measurement and the formulas they used in their day-to-day activities. Two other questions asked were: whether they knew how to use a clock and a telephone and what things they had committed to memory. The collated data sets from this instrument are immediately usable by curriculum developers.

   The second data gathering instrument for this section was an individual interview schedule for at least three of the wise persons identified by the respondents of the first interview schedule. They were asked to state what they knew in various fields (e.g., law and order, religion, customs, food), the sources of their knowledge, the advice they gave to those who consulted them, and their mode of imparting or transmitting their knowledge.

5. Procedure for gathering information on acquisition, retention and loss of literacy skills. Data sources are the interview schedules for teachers, school officials, and persons in-charge of NGO literacy programs, for participants of literacy programs, for non-participants of literacy programs, and for individuals who became literate on their own. These instruments generated information on literacy acquisition, loss and retention, reasons for dropping-out, teaching procedures of formal and non-formal schools, reasons for participation and non-participation of individuals in literacy programs, and on how individuals became literate on their own. A previous study (Literacy Retention, DECS 1983) done by the Department of Education was used as baseline for comparative purposes.

   An individual interview schedule, using the life history format was used for individuals who became literate on their own.

6. Procedure for gathering information on the relation between literacy practice and development at the individual level. Data sources were four sets of instruments administered to different groups of respondents. The first instrument was an individual interview schedule for those who participated in the literacy programs, if any, of the community. This instrument sought answers to the following questions: (1) Why did you join the literacy program? (2) What skills/activities did you learn from the program? (3) What activities can you do now that you could not do before becoming literate? (4) How do you plan to use the skills you have acquired in achieving your aspirations/ambitions in life?

   The second instrument was a set of literacy and numeracy tests administered to purposive samples in the research sites. The first test was the Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS). Here, the respondents were asked to answer eleven questions, nine questions about one's self (e.g., name, address, birth rate), and two numeracy questions where examinees were asked to perform basic arithmetic operations. The second type of test was that given by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in the literacy-mapping program of the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE). The Enumerator-Assisted Literacy Questionnaire (NSO1) tests the rudiments of functional literacy in reading, writing and arithmetic. Another version of this test (NSO2) requires the respondent to write his/her name, address, birth rate and highest educational attainment. There is also a section on reading comprehension of a short paragraph. The NSO test comes in two forms: English and Filipino. The third literacy test was conceptualized and developed by Education Forum (EF), an NGO doing literacy work. Essentially a test of basic literacy and comprehension skills, one item in the literacy test asked the respondents to construct sentences about their jobs, country and experiences. Numeracy skills were tested by the application of the basic arithmetic operations up to problem-solving. The tests were translated to the home languages of the respondents.

The third instrument was a set of three psycho-social rating scales. One scale was adapted from Hofstede's scales used in a 40-nation study including the Philippines (1983) covering four value dimensions: uncertainty, avoidance (UAI), individualism vs. collectivism (IDV), masculinity vs. femininity (MAS, or in non-sexist language: assertiveness vs. nurturance), and power distance (PDI). The four dimensions, according to Hofstede, relate to ways of dealing with dilemmas and conflicts (UAI), conceptions of self (IDV and MAS), and relation to authority (PDI). All together, the scales cover cultural dimensions related to work. The two other scales on work attitudes, entrepreneurship and self-esteem were developed for this study. All the scales were translated to the home languages of the respondents.

The objectives of this procedure involving three different sets of research instruments are multi-dimensional. The first set sought to inquire into participants' motivations for joining literacy programs, literacy skills learned as well as activities made possible by these skills, and future activities or plans involving literate practice.

The second set sought to establish in a preliminary way the statistical characteristics of existing Philippine literacy tests, as well as to get some quantitative indications of the respondents' literacy skills, in particular the levels of thinking manifested by the responses.

The third set is a very preliminary attempt to establish a relation, if any, between literacy and some culturally determined and work-related attitudes and values.

7. Procedure for gathering information on the relation between literacy practice and development at the group or community level. In addition to the data from the Hofstede scales, as adapted, data sources also included two sets of completed questionnaires (one for the community respondents and one for development officers of NGOs operating in the area). The first data-gathering instrument was an interview schedule asking a purposive sampling of community leaders and community folk, to give information on various aspects of development projects (including literacy) in their area. Respondents were asked if they knew of any development projects in their area, what these were, who participated and what problems they have encountered while attending the program. They were also asked to give suggestions on how these programs might be sustained and improved.

   The second instrument asked the respondents (development officers of NGOs) what their programs were, what problems they have encountered, what they had so far accomplished and how their programs have contributed to the development of the community.

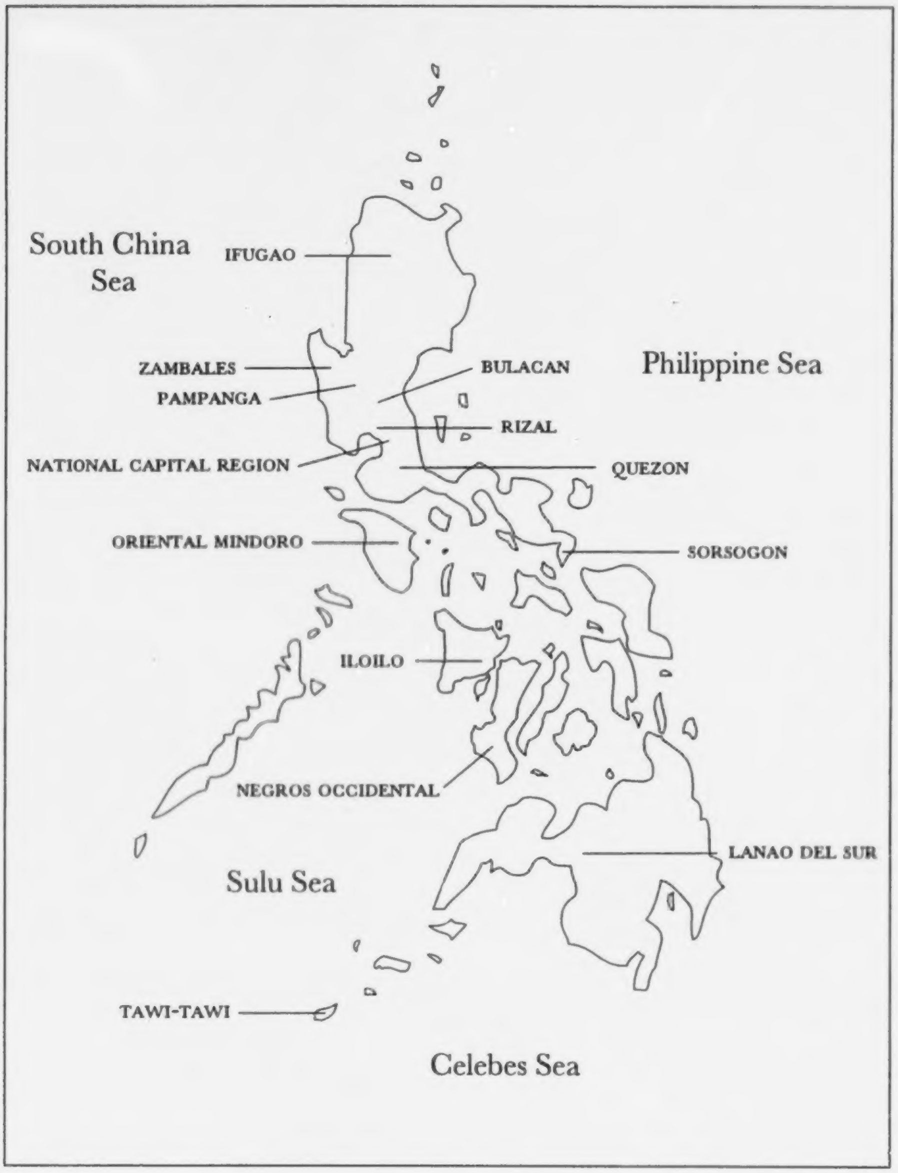
All told, a total of 12 sets of instruments were used, all of which were originally developed for this study, except for the literacy tests and the adapted Hofstede scales. These instruments provided some structure for the ethnography, supplementing standard ethnographic methods (e.g., participant observation, spot and key informant interviews, spot checks, etc.) and allowing for comparability across the research sites.

The field work for this study was done from September 15 to December 15, 1993 during which the researchers stayed continuously on site. The relatively short duration of the field work was offset by the fact that research team leaders were chosen on the basis of their research familiarity with the area (most of them native to the region), and their mastery of the local language.

The result is an ethnography which is multi-disciplinary in design, making use of qualitative and quantitative strategies and techniques from anthropology, sociology, psychology and education. It is an exploratory study of the broad spectrum of issues which delineates literacy as social practice in the Philippines, as well as the relation between literacy and development. Thus, the study paves the way for the formulation of specific hypotheses and appropriate research agenda for a better understanding of functional literacy in the Philippine context to be used as bases for the design and implementation of adult literacy and continuing education programs.

Specifically, the methodology allowed us to explore in a global fashion the possible elements and factors constituting the dynamics of functional literacy in Philippine communities so as to reveal similar and different characteristics and patterns as well as the conditions that determine diversity and variation. This approach is of considerable significance not only for academic and theoretical purposes, but for practical reasons as well. The understanding of common patterns and characteristics of the phenomena of functional literacy and non-literacy will lead to the design of a non-formal literacy program whose processes are informed by scientific knowledge, and whose outcomes would therefore have greater predictability. The exploratory nature of this study is again emphasized at this point, thus the delineation of themes rather than research problems.

Figure 1: Map of Research Sites


South China Sea
IFUGAO
ZAMBALES
PAMPANGA
BULACAN
Philippine Sea
RIZAL
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
QUEZON
ORIENTAL MINDORO
SORSOGON
ILOILO
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL
LANAO DEL SUR
Sulu Sea
TAWI-TAWI
Celebes Sea

CHAPTER III

Community Life as Context of Literacy Practice

IF THE PRACTICE OF LITERACY is conceived in the first instance as social practice, its first dimension must be in the rhythm of social life in which the practice of literacy may or may not occur. The nature of community life is conceptualized in this study as the first context of literacy practice.

In this section, the communities included in the study are described according to their physical, historical, demographic, economic, political, educational and general socio-cultural features. The various community activities, corresponding to the major areas of community life, as well as the problems encountered in the course of these activities, are presented. The extended descriptions are intended to show the general "lifestyle", or rhythm of life in the communities representing six types of marginal Philippine communities in order, in the last part (summary) of this chapter, to locate adequately the practice and meanings of literacy within the context of these community types.

A Traditional Philippine Community

Boheh Umos: a Community of Sea Nomads

Bongao lies on the western tip of the Tawi-Tawi mainland in the Mindanao region, Southern Philippines. Composed of three major islands, the municipality has a total land area of 19,748 hectares. On clear days, some islands off Sabah in Borneo are visible from Bongao's highest peak.

Traditionally a municipality dominated by the Sama land-based and sea nomads, Bongao is now densely populated by Tausug (hill tribe from Jolo mainland and Siasi) migrants. When hostilities between the military and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) broke out in the 1970s, the Tausug started moving into the area. To avoid inter-tribal conflicts, many of the Sama residents migrated to Sabah, Zamboanga, Davao, Visayas and Manila. According to the 1990 national census, 76.42% of the Bongao population are Tausug while only 14.81% are Sama. Other ethnic groups in Bongao make up the remaining 8.7 percent. The term *Sama* refers to all types of Sama people, whether boat and strand dwellers, or inland inhabitants. However, in this study only the sea-based and strand-dwelling Sama are included. Land-based Sama are the more acculturated group, having converted to Islam.

The primary economic activity of the people is fishing. In general, the Sama are said to be the fisherfolk in the community while the Tausug are engaged in agriculture and in the buying and selling of farm products. Retail marketing is done by both groups in the streets or in the town's *tabuh* or *pasar* (public market) near the waterfront.

The more affluent populace of Bongao are engaged in barter trading with the neighbouring island of Sabah. Barter trading, as traditionally employed and understood, is the exchange of locally produced commercial items or material resources for similar or other materials of equal value from another place. For centuries, this intrinsic regulation governed the system of barter trade practised by the Sulu archipelago at large with Malaysia and Indonesia. Under the traditional barter system, no monetary unit is employed; thus, the volume of export and import products is automatically regulated. But government restrictions and corruption have resulted in technical smuggling engaged in by civilians, officials and military men.

Probably the most ancient settlement in Bongao, Boheh Umos was once the seat of authority among royal *datus*, *panglimas* (religious leaders) and *maharadjas*. Its early inhabitants were the seafaring Sama, known generically in the English-speaking world as the *Badjao*.

Located east of Bongao *poblacion*, Boheh Umos, a Sama strand settlement, is accessible by boat from all islands in the north, east and south. This settlement, called *komkoman* (literally, grip), consists of several spatial clusters of some four to six (the maximum number) houses or stilts. Following the pattern of the *munda'an* (or boat-dwelling clusters), one *komkoman* is literally independent of another by virtue of the five–to six– meter distance between them. The space between *komkoman* must be wide enough to allow for the passage of a *pelang* (vinta) corresponding to the Sama concept of maritime traffic control for the settlement as a whole. This description of the housing pattern corresponds to the basic unit of social organization in the Sama tradition.

A *komkoman* hut is a one-room affair built out of local materials that can be secured in exchange for fish and other marine products with the land-based Sama or Tausug. The door of each house normally faces the open sea and boats are moored in this direction to make escape from an invading tribe easier. Smaller boats are used as floating stores.

When a *komkoman* goes out to sea, it is called a *munda'an* (literally the fronthead of a boat; from the root word *munda*–front). In the context of Sama culture and traditions, a *munda'an* is a fleet of Sama boats (sometimes with the households) on an organized fishing activity. Their communal survival is anchored on the social prescription of "What I eat is what you eat". It is composed of a kin-group whose members are primary relatives, each one assigned to a specific duty. In shark hunting, for example, these tasks include harpooning, cleaning the sharks, slicing them according to specifications of the buyers, drying the meat, and cutting the dorsal and ventral fins and the tail for sharksfin soup.

A unique feature that distinguishes the Sama from all other cultural groups in the Malay archipelago is their attachment to a common origin they call *pehak* (fish eggs or gonad fit snugly together and covered with a protective membrane, symbolizing the bonding of the community). The *pehak* is the unifying force and constant reminder of the Sama identity. Every Sama member in the *munda'an* is expected to abide by the guidelines for living set by the *Botang Mat'toa* (wise man), and any serious digression from traditional expectations usually results in the expulsion of the erring member from the community.

It should be noted that these same Sama settlers have been driven out of other places in the Sulu Archipelago as a result of uncontrolled piracy, common robbery, banditry, and all forms of threats perpetrated by armed Tausug. It was not surprising, at an instance one day during the conduct of this research, when the entire community of Boheh Umos disappeared overnight following an outbreak of hostilities in Bongao. It is during this migratory period that one calls them "Badjao". The remarkable survival of the Sama, an ancient tribal group mentioned in Chinese historical records of antiquity, in its traditional community life may be partly explained by their capacity to bring their community with them, in all the meanings of this term.

One incomplete elementary school (Grades 1-4) with five teachers in Barangay Boheh Umos serves mostly the land-based Sama. Two teach Grade 1 while the rest are distributed among Grades 2 to 4. There are at least 35 students per class. There are three non-formal literacy programs sponsored by the Department of Education, UNICEF, and a private foundation.

Four Transitional Philippine Communities

Alaga: an Upland Tribal Community Practising Kaingin (Swidden) Agriculture

Situated in the central part of Panay in the Visayas Region, Calinaw is the last town of Iloilo adjoining the provinces of Antique, Aklan and Capiz. Composed of 59 *barangays*, Calinaw has an approximate area of 26,919 square kilometres.

Alaga, the barangay included in this project, is an interior barangay 18 kilometres west of the *poblacion* (town centre) of Calinaw. The general topography of the area is rolling terrain alternating with hilly to near mountainous portions.

It is composed of 120 households, with a total population of 631, all of them Bukidnon. Traditionally a nomadic tribe practising shifting agriculture, the Bukidnon settled in the area in the late 1950s and 60s to till the *bantud* (hilly slope).

Bukidnon pride themselves in a genealogy of local heroes referred to as the *dalaganan* (literally, persons to run to for help), or men with superpowers. Two of them are Berdin and Artuz, father and son respectively, who resisted Spanish and American attempts to take control of the Bukidnon areas. Though not from the area, these two are considered local heroes although they are considered bandits by the lowlanders. Keepers of the traditional lore are the ***babaylan*** (shaman) who are all women.

A traditional practice is the giving of *ligbok* (archaic) names. This is true of the Bukidnons 60 years old and older, whose *ligbok* names include Anggoran, Hugdawan, Dapuan, and Tumagas, among others. In 1960, these names were changed to Christian ones and duly registered with the local government. Most of the new family names begin with the letter "c" (e.g., Caballero, Casiple), following the Spanish colonial practice of using names beginning with the first letter of the town name for easier identification. This practice has resulted in confusion about or loss of identity of many Bukidnon.

Before 1966, Alaga consisted of only 20 houses situated far apart from each other because farmers wanted to stay close to their *kaingin* (swidden farm). By 1986, this number had doubled, with the new inhabitants mostly related to the original settlers by consanguinity and affinity.

In recent years, an important factor in the concentration of the houses in Alaga was the hamletting ordered by the military in 1980. The arrival of the military was intended to quell the growing influence of the New People's Army (NPA) in the area, an influence that was the product of the impoverished condition of the area, the lack of government support, and the people's fear of the military. One negative effect of hamletting was the Bukidnons' loss of their *kaingin* farms. Military abuses and human rights violations against some community members were likewise reported. Tensions and encounters between the NPA and the military detachment continued until fairly recently when the peace and order situation became relatively normal.

The primary source of livelihood in the area is swidden agricultural production of rice, banana and coffee, the last two being cash crops. Alaga remains impoverished, although people are beginning to recognize the need for education to improve their quality of life. Indeed, majority of the barangay residents live well below the poverty threshold.

Many Bukidnon 40 years old and above have little or no formal education due to the absence of schools in the area until very recently. A primary school (Grades 1–4) was set up only two years ago. Still, going to school is difficult for most because of the 5-kilometre walk on hilly slopes.

Men and women generally marry early: at 14 to 15 for the women, and 16 to 18 for the men. Most marriage rituals such as the traditional *pamalaye* (where the boy's parents propose the intention of the boy to the girl's parents) and the *punsyon* (wedding feast) are arranged by the parents. In general, those in the above 40 age bracket still follow traditional pre-marriage practices like asking for *pangayo* (bride gift) from the man's family. Those in their 60s still practise child marriage and polygamy.

Principal problems identified by respondents include low productivity, lack of technical assistance and training, lack of capital, scarce water supply, lack of information, weak support from government, lack of education, fear of both military and rebels, and some doubts about traditional thinking and beliefs.

In the midst of poverty and tension, recent signs of development and stability in the area are government projects such as the projected building of impounding dams and watershed reforestation, documentation of traditional epics, classes for children, and road building.

There are expectations that these projects would not meet the same fate as the irrigation and the water reservoir projects which were never finished because of the Marcos-Aquino transition.

Kala: an Upland Tribal Community Practising Extensive Rice Terracing Agriculture

Ifugao province is one of the five provinces of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in the heart of the Cordillera mountains of Northern Luzon. With a land area of 261,361 hectares, it is one of the smallest provinces in the country. But it is also one of the richest in natural resources, with its mountains, forests, rivers, and wildlife, and its centuries-old rice terraces covering an area of about 100 square miles.

Ifugao has ten municipalities with a total population as of 1990 of approximately 149,161, of which 75,171 are males and 73, 990 are females. The Ifugao, one of eight major ethnic groups in the Cordillera, comprise a majority of the multi-ethnic population, followed by the Ilocanos. Traditionally an animistic people, majority of the population have been Christianized, with Roman Catholicism as the major religious denomination as of 1980.

With its magnificent terraces, unique and striking cultural traditions, and colourful history, Ifugao has long been the object of study among Filipino and foreign scholars. According to the census of the National Statistics Office, Ifugao has one of the lowest literacy rates in the whole Cordillera region. Of the ten municipalities that comprise the area, Kala is listed to have the highest illiteracy rate.

Some 15 kilometres from the capital town of Lagawe is Kala, the oldest town in the province, inhabited by all the three Ifugao subgroups namely, the Ayangan, the Kalanguya, and the Tuwali. Of its 24 *barangays*, Napulawan and Jamalapah, adjacent barangays located five kilometres west and eight kilometres southwest of Kala *poblacion*, respectively, were chosen for this study.

Like the rest of Ifugao, the people of Kala believe that they are the direct descendants of the deities Wigan and Bugan. Long before the coming of the Spaniards, these communities flourished with self-sufficient economies based on widespread rice terracing agriculture. Social classes existed with prestige rituals and wealth as the bases for stratification. Customary laws governed community life and moral authority was vested in the *manlapu* (wise men), who possessed wisdom, knowledge of the *baki* (traditional lore such as community customs and traditions) good character, and wealth.

Much of the traditional way of life in Ifugao was preserved even with the coming of the Spanish colonizers, largely because the people fought fiercely against the imposition of colonial authority. On the other hand, with their superior military power and primarily with their institution of the public school system, the Americans succeeded where the Spaniards failed.

After World War II, the transformation of indigenous socio-political structures and institutions in the area became more pronounced. For example, where before community leaders were chosen for their mastery of traditional laws and rituals, now they were chosen on the basis of their education in American-introduced schools.

Both *barangays* are composed of far-flung *sitios* (small villages) with an average of 15 to 20 households per *sitio*. Napulawan has nine *sitios* while Jamalapah has eleven.

The two barangays may be reached only via one narrow and unlevelled road that is safer for walking than for taking rides in the only vehicle that is available for rent to transport heavy items from the town centre. One elementary school serves the *barangay* and here all community meetings are also held.

The primary economic activity of both *barangays* is farming. Both communities produce rice planted in the *payew* (rice terraces), vegetables planted in the *uma* (farm), and coffee. The rice produce is placed in a rice granary called *alang*, a structure that illustrates the Ifugaos' ingenuity and technology. It is a smaller construction than the *abung*, the Ifugao house, and is built with cylindrical or rectangular blocks on stilts to prevent rats from climbing up. Inside the *alang* is the *bulul*, a carved wooden idol, the guardian of the granary.

Apart from farming, other livelihood activities are weaving, trade, and carpentry. A few residents produce handicrafts on a piece-rate and contractual basis. Poultry and livestock are raised for consumption; *carabaos* (water buffalos) are few and are used only as farm animals.

Most livelihood activities involve the whole family if not the whole community. Farming, in particular, is a community activity governed by traditional practices. One is the *ubbo* during the planting and harvest seasons, requiring all families with rice fields to help one another finish the tasks of planting and harvesting. Those who do not join the *ubbo* are left on their own. Another traditional practice that has survived is the system of property distribution based on the law of primogeniture: the eldest child, regardless of gender, inherits the greater portion of family property, thereby ensuring that a family has at least one powerful member who may be approached for help. This system also takes care of the difficulty of dividing property, especially rice terraces.

Families with more than five rice fields are considered *kadangyan* (rich). At present, there are no *kadangyan* left in Kala because family properties which used to be large have been subdivided through generations of inheritance following the law of primogeniture.

Like their livelihood activities, the socio-cultural activities of the people are mostly communal in nature, involving either the family or the entire community. The activities are traditional, modern or a combination of both. The *cañao* (ritual feast) is still being practised;

the mode of settling disputes combines the traditional and the modern, calling for the resolution of the conflict by duly elected ***barangay*** officials with the advise of the ***mumbaki*** (native priest or ritualist). Weddings combine traditional and modern aspects: dowry practice is still observed but the wedding ceremony is performed in church. On the other hand, modern Christian influences are evident in prayer meetings, community benefit dances and the like.

Political and civic activities are likewise communal. Specific activities identified by respondents include political campaigns and rallies, participation in barangay development projects, and in health projects such as immunization/vaccination, sanitation and nutrition.

Problems concerning these areas of community life were also identified by the respondents: 1) poverty especially for those with small farms or no farms at all; 2) lack of knowledge of modern farming techniques; and 3) negative attitudes such as laziness and apathy. On the family level, the problems identified include 1) lack of capital for farm inputs and new varieties of seedlings; 2) absence of agricultural technologists; and 3) limited production due to one-cropping capacity of land and scarcity of water due to forest denudation.

On the socio-cultural level, problems identified include conflict between traditional and modern beliefs as evidenced by the tendency among the educated children to label traditions as "backward" and "uncivilized".

One political-civic problem indicated by the respondents is the divisiveness among political candidates. Another source of tension is the lack of co-operation and some negative attitudes among members of co-operatives.

Economic difficulties have led to the migration of several families to a neighbouring province where jobs as tenants and share-croppers are available. Another reason for migration is the accessibility of more schools for the children in the new areas. The two barangays each have one complete elementary school (Grades 1-6). But although these schools are located at the centre of their respective barangays, students still have to walk several kilometres to reach them. There are two private sectarian high schools in the Kala *poblacion* (town proper).

One Barangay Health Unit provides services for TB, leprosy and diarrhea control, and nutrition services. Malnutrition among children in the area is highest the ages 1 to 6 years. The assigned midwife visits the area only once a week.

The lack of social and support services from the local and national governments is said to have contributed to the erstwhile support given to the New People's Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) by the people of the province. It is said that these places used to be the venue for mass meetings held by the NPA to discuss regional problems and to encourage the people to empower themselves. Recently, some non-government organizations have started to establish themselves in the two barangays to help people realize their aspirations.

Sta. Rosa: a Refugee Camp in the Shadow of Mt. Pinatubo

In June 1991, Mt. Pinatubo which had been dormant for about 463 years, erupted in one of this century's most violent volcanic eruptions. Estimated damage as of October 1991 was upwards of 10 billion pesos, representing destruction of more than 100,000 houses, 80,000 hectares of land and 30,000 hectares of fishponds. As of September 1991, 773 deaths, 184 injured and 23 missing persons were reported, as well as 249,371 families or about 1.18 million individuals adversely affected. As of June 1993, 31 resettlement sites have been set up, while more than 3,500 displaced families were still in temporary evacuation centres called "tent cities". Lahar and mudflows continue to this date and the land is not expected to be productive in at least 10 years (Sta. Rosa and Loob data, based on reports from the National Disaster Coordinating Council).

Two Mt. Pinatubo-affected sites are included in this study as special communities in transition. These are a refugee centre in San Fernando, Pampanga, and a resettlement area in Zambales.

Sta. Rosa Tent City is a refugee camp located in a two-and-a-half hectare privately-owned site approximately 10 kilometres north of San Fernando, capital city of Pampanga province in the Luzon region. Situated near the MacArthur Highway, the major road linking Pampanga to its neighbouring provinces, the camp is accessible to all types of land transportation. There is no electricity in this tent city but there are several deep well pumps and eight public toilets strategically located around the camp.

The 601 families of Sta. Rosa were forced to evacuate their homes in Bacolor, Pampanga following the lahar flow of September 7, 1991. The first group of evacuees to arrive in the area consisted of fifty residents of Barangay Duat. Within an hour, they were joined by 600 evacuees from other *barangays*. Within a week, their number had grown to 900 families. At the time of this research, however, only about 300 families had moved either to a resettlement area or other evacuation centres.

The families who have remained live in tents spaced a few metres from each other. The plastic tents vary widely in appearance and style due to the use of additional materials like wood, galvanized iron, cardboard, and sacks salvaged by the residents from their original homes. Most tents are sparely furnished and contain only the barest of household necessities: a *papag* or low table used as a bed at night and a seat in the daytime, some wooden benches, some plastic chairs, and a gas or clay stove for cooking.

Living conditions are cramped and hardly stable but the residents have set up a semblance of order and normalcy. At one end of the community is the elementary school, a single structure consisting of three classrooms built by the residents themselves from materials salvaged from their old community. The school has a *cogon* (grass) roof, slated walls, and a dirt floor.

Although functional, the building is suffocatingly hot in the summer and muddy in the rainy season. Still, most of the 129 school-age children attend the school fairly regularly. Teachers have been assigned to the school by the Department of Education. Those of high school age go to school in the nearby town.

By far the most unstable aspect of life for residents in Sta. Rosa is the economic. Majority of the residents had been gainfully employed in their old communities. The men were involved in farming, livestock raising, carpentry, construction work, and mechanical-electrical work. The women, on the other hand, worked as seamstresses and embroiderers, vendors, storeowners, and laundrywomen. Evacuation resulted in the loss of these jobs and for most men in the Tent City, chronic unemployment. What few jobs are available around the community require skills they do not have.

The loss of their usual community activities leaves many people with a lot of time to idle away. Thus, for socio-cultural activities, many respondents just sit around and chat, (*walang gawain, walang libangan, nakaupo, nagkakapitbahay*, no work, no leisure, just sitting, talking to neighbours). A major activity of the adult respondents is constantly visiting their old homes. The men hike to their former homes every weekend, even if the only visible portions are rooftops. Asked what they do there, the respondents said they did nothing but that it was enough for them to be able to see the presumed sites of their homes. Some of the women reported sweeping the vicinity of their old homes. Their greatest loss, according to some respondents, is the loss of their community, especially friends, neighbours and the cemeteries of their dead.

The inability of the respondents to detach themselves from their old communities is a graphic illustration of the far-reaching psychological impact of the evacuation, which accounts for the general atmosphere of helplessness and despair in the community. Many respondents reported changes in their personality, symptoms of stress-related disorders like nervousness, depression and anxiety, ill health.

However, many respondents noted positive changes in social relations brought about by the Pinatubo crisis. Families have become more cohesive, with each member carrying out assigned tasks and generally keeping calm during the evacuation. Cooperation among family members and community members was generally marked.

By the nature of the crisis, the community has become the focus of public and private assistance projects. Barangay officials gave detailed accounts of relief and rehabilitation efforts from government and non-government organizations.

But the experiences of the residents of development projects by both the government and non-governmental organizations show the lack of sustainability and feasibility of development efforts. Probably taking advantage of the tremendous national and international attention, publicity seekers, government agencies included, immediately initiated actions and undertook projects which they viewed as "developmental". Haphazardly planned and implemented, these projects turned out to be palliative and short-lived. For instance, the effort to teach the residents how to make ceramic figurines and headbands was not sustained. "Nothing happened because the system is incomplete," is a common observation among the residents showing the lack of understanding of the actual needs of the refugees, the absence of coordination and duplication of efforts, and the weak feasibility of the projects.

Opportunism was also prevalent in the area. Some individuals, pretending to represent some non-governmental organizations, wanted to assist the residents by offering them overseas employment, but only when the residents put up P20,000 as counterpart fund to be given to the "NGO" through the individual.

At the time of the study, only a few agencies had kept up assistance efforts. These are the Department of Health which sent medical personnel to maintain a health clinic, and the Department of Education. Some short-term training courses aiming to provide residents with suitable livelihood skills were conducted by the Department of Trade and Industry. These include courses in figurine-making, soap-making, high-speed sewing, and basket-weaving, even literacy. However, the lack of capital for the raw materials and a market for the finished products, discouraged the residents from pursuing these livelihood projects. They also complain that their basic problem, relocation to a more permanent site, is not being addressed.

Loob Resettlement Area, Zambales

The Loob Resettlement Area, about 328 hectares in area, is located at the northeastern part of the town of Botolan, Zambales, in the Luzon Region. Loob is accessible from the town proper by a gravel road.

Before the eruption of the volcano, Barangay Villar was a lush and green plateau within twelve kilometres of Mt. Pinatubo. Its people, the tribal Ita, were swidden farmers-gatherers who lived unrestricted and relatively abundant lives in the mountain. They planted rice, banana, and root crops (yam, sweet potato, cassava) for their consumption; roamed the mountains for fruits and firewood they could sell in the local market; and hunted deer, wild pigs and fowl. Some tended small variety stores; others raised pigs, chickens, goats, and carabaos. They handled amounts up to P5,000.

After the first eruption in June 1991, the Ita were evacuated to Botolan Evacuation Centre. A week after the biggest eruption on June 15, 1991, they were moved to the Tent City in Bulawen. Later, the group composed of 185 families or 887 persons were resettled in Loob.

In the resettlement area, the Ita experienced tremendous changes. Apart from losing their homes, fertile land and livelihood, they lost the freedom of their mountain dwelling. "*Lumiit kami*" (We became small) is their way of describing the changes in their lives.

Each house is on a 300-square metre lot in the settlement, generally made of wood, bamboo, *sawali* (wooden bamboo slats), and *cogon* (grass). The first floor has an earthen floor equipped with a *papag* (bench) and open-fire stove, a bamboo bed (which sometimes serves as elevated bedroom), gas lamps, and other kitchen paraphernalia. The lot is too small for the Ita. Aside from gardening and housekeeping, most of them have nothing to do. Some women do outside laundry, prepare food to sell, make rattan flowers, hairclips, and baskets. The spears and bows and arrows they used to make for hunting are now made for sale to tourists and other visitors. A few tend small stores. Some are members of two newly established co-operatives in the area. Some engage in *Cash for Work* or *Food for Work*, in government projects.

To augment their meagre income they grow vegetables, root crops and fruit trees, or raise pigs. But these efforts bring very small returns. Often, when a family is short of food to cook, the mother would harvest and cook yam, cassava or sweet potatoes and serve it together with sardines or dried shrimps. On especially difficult days at the resettlement site, the Ita eat only one meal a day consisting of boiled sweet potato and coffee. Sometimes they go without food for a whole day.

In the resettlement area, many became ill and some have died due to overcrowding and inadequate food. Children also perform poorly in school due to lack of food, poor nutrition, poor eyesight, restlessness, and exhaustion. They report feelings of being caged in, deepening their feeling of powerlessness and despair. However, as in the Sta. Rosa refugee community, family members have become closer and more co-operative.

Perhaps due to their transitory and difficult existence, their aspirations are small. They just want to be able to eat three meals a day, learn some new skills in order to earn a little, acquire a little farmland and capital, and send their children to school. They consider education as their only hope for a better life.

Various government (e.g., livelihood, literacy, environment, nutrition, and infrastructure) and non-government projects (e.g., construction of a water system, nipa huts, recreational facilities, day care centre, feeding and health improvement, and gardening) though developmental in intent, have proven unsustainable and ineffective, even as it has also been observed that the Ita have become quite dependent on these projects.

A Moslem Filipino Community

Taka: a Farming and Lake-Fishing Community

One of the 37 municipalities in the eastern side of Lake Lanao in the Mindanao Region of the Southern Philippines, Taka has an estimated total land area of 29.1 square kilometres. The Taraka river, one of the many bodies of water that flow into Lake Lanao, bisects the municipality. Legend has it that this river was a canal dug by Taraka, the first founding *apo* (ancestor) to reside in the area, descendant of the local heroes, Radia Indarapatra, and Butuanem Kalinan. When he died, Balindong, another *apo*, came to live in Gapao Balindong, "the domain of Balindong." According to a second account of the origin of Taka settlers, migrants from the coastal areas of Southern Mindanao, particularly along the Iranun areas, came upon what is now Taka and eventually settled there to intermarry with the original inhabitants.

Ranked fifth in population density in Lanao del Sur, Taka had a total population of 13,567 in 1990, of predominantly Maranao origin. Houses in Taka vary from the traditional to the modern. The usual structure is a single-room house without partition. A *kolambo* (mosquito net) defines the sleeping area and visitors are entertained in the *panggao*, an elevated and decorated wooden bed.

Major livelihood activities are fishing, farming and trading. Fishing in particular is both a hobby and source of income. Fishermen ride their *banca* to fish in the *minanga* (mouth of the river) on the lake shoreline. To augment the income earned from fishing, Maranao women weave *dumpas* (mats) made of *sesed* (grass) which grows in swampy places. But the primary economic activity is farming and 70% of the total land area is devoted to agriculture.

The Maranaos are generally of the low income group. Indeed, in the town of Taka, only the mayor is rich and politically influential. The absence of wealth, however, does not show on the Maranaos who favour jewelry. Traditional Maranao jewelry is varied and elaborate for the Maranao are master brass craftsmen.

Two forms of education exist side by side: westernized public school education and the Arabic education offered in the *madaris* (singular *madrasah*, Moslem community schools). In the *barangay* there are six elementary schools, five primary schools, and one government high school with 685 students and 26 teachers. In contrast, there are 12 operational *Madrasah* schools with 1,983 students and 38 *Ustadz* (teachers of Arabic). Instruction in the *madaris* is mainly for reading the Qur'an and secondarily for writing in Arabic. There is a general lack of reading materials in the barangay, no newsstands or reading centres. Occasionally, newspapers from Manila (in English) or from Cebu (in English and Cebuano) are available. The pronounced absence of reading materials in the local language (Maranao) is partly explained by the fact that writing in Maranao which has been reduced to Romanized script is not encouraged.

Farming and fishing are the primary livelihood activities, supplementary activities are livestock raising and mat-weaving. Reading of the Qur'an is the main socio-cultural activity, cutting across all groups. Other individual activities include playing chess, praying and playing the *kolintang* and *kambayoka* (musical instruments) for this area is best known for its local musician. Family activities are prayer and listening to music. Group activities are *kangalawanga* (attending to family life) and praying in the mosque. Political-civic activities include: participating in the elections as voters, poll watchers or leaders, attending meetings, and getting involved in barangay activities (e.g., beautification drives, tree-planting programs).

Financial difficulties, such as lack of funds for health services, is a universal complaint, as well as lack of farming implements and unemployment. Socio-cultural problems listed again revolve around money — for sports activities, for *kasuotan*, (clothing and decoration). Problems include gambling, the generation gap, election fraud and violence.

Four Marginal Philippine Communities of the Christian Majority

Magdalena: a Hill Monocrop (Sugar) Community

Centrally located in the southern portion of the province is Kabangkalan, the commercial capital and gateway to the five municipalities in the southern part of the province of Negros Occidental in the Visayan Region. Negros Occidental is the principal producer of sugar with the most widespread plantation economy in the country. Forty-seven percent of the total land area planted to sugar-cane is owned by only 7% of the population (A. J. de Boer, 1978). Negros Occidental has the most serious agrarian problem in the country.

The research site is Barangay Magdalena, located some 23 kilometres. from the poblacion. It is a mountainous area accessible by public transport such as buses, jeepneys, and the big trucks carrying sugar-cane to the mill. There are 12 *puroks* (small villages) in a total land area of 1,600 hectares. Of these, 400 hectares are for residential/commercial use while the rest are for agricultural purposes.

The real name of Magdalena is locally believed to refer to the barter exchanges during the pre-Spanish period and the migration of various people to and from the place.

Kaingin farming was the primary livelihood of early inhabitants of Magdalena. These were tribal people called *maghat* or *buki* who moved from place to place as swidden farmers-hunters. Today, the *maghat* are still around, particularly in the neighbouring *sitios* to which they were transferred during the military hamletting operations in the early 80s.

Magdalena has the second biggest population in Kabangkalan, and its growth rate is projected to be 2.47% annually, with the current population pegged at 6,008. The 1990 census indicates a predominantly young population.

Majority of the Magdalena population live well below the poverty threshold. In fact, only 2% of the population earn more than P40,000 annually (current rate of exchange is US$1.00 = P25.00).

Where before the principal livelihood activity in the area was rice farming in the *kaingin* (swidden) farms, the destruction of forest resources and land grabbing by elite groups paved the way for Magdalena's transformation into an hacienda-type community of monocrop sugar cane plantations. There is a sugar mill in a neighbouring barangay.

Three types of farming arrangements exist: the first is sharing, where the landowner and the tenant provide the planting materials together and both shoulder all the expenses so that both divide the income equally between them. The second is the percentage system where the owner provides all the materials and shoulders all the expenses and thus enjoys 90% of the profits. The third practice is the *agsador* type, where financing and expenses are again shared by both the owner and the tenant, but the net income is based on the amount agreed upon by the *agsador* (labourer) and the landowner. There are great difficulties in attempting to change the monocrop system on account of the lack of technical knowledge and support for the transition period, and the ingrained view that sugar is the only crop that will grow in the area.

In 1949, a public primary school was established in the area. However, enrolment trends fluctuate widely, depending on the situation. In 1952, for instance, a sharp decrease in enrolment was noted because children went up to the mountains to help with the *kaingin* farming. During the Martial Law years when the New People's Army (NPA) and the military were in the constant fighting, enrolment again dropped sharply because many families migrated to more peaceful areas. The Magdalena Catholic High School was founded in 1966 by Irish Columban missionaries. Now a private high school owned by the Diocese of Kabangkalan, the high school offers a four-year scholarship program to 60 freshmen yearly.

Like many other places in the country characterized by great disparities in the distribution of wealth and by a dearth of basic social services (e.g., electricity was installed in Magdalena only in October of 1993), the area became the site of violent clashes between the NPAs and the Philippine Army. Magdalena became a base for NPA operations in that part of the province. The year 1984 is considered to have been particularly chaotic, with the killing of several people in the area and the hamletting of the village population. In 1989, a military detachment was set up upon the request of the parish priest and some local officials. This was followed by one military detachment after another, with the fast turnover said to be due to the abuses of the military personnel assigned to the area.

The military-political turmoil notwithstanding, the people of Magdalena continue to go about their labours. A run-down of the low-paying work arrangements on the hacienda is as follows: 1) The *tinumbada/tumbada* system which refers to the clearing of grass before the planting season. Workers are paid according to the size of the area actually cleared; 2) the *kamada* system which refers to the cutting of sugar-cane and grouping them into *kamadas* or bundles. Workers are paid according to each *kamada* made; 3) the *alili* system (standing crop) which is an agreement made between a farmer and buyer prior to the start of the planting season. According to this agreement, the farmer sells his crops to the buyer at a fixed price per ton and the buyer will then finance the *tapas* (cutting) and *karga* (loading); and 4) the *karga tapas* (cutting and loading), a form of hard labour, payment for which is measured according to the number of sugar-cane bundles cut and loaded.

On the brighter side, the people are still able to observe community activities like the *bulang* (cockfight), the *punsyon* (celebration), the *binayle* (dance) held in the town plaza, *tsismis* (gossip), and the *fiesta* (religious festival). Other community activities include elections, Bible studies, attending Holy Mass, and *novenas* (9-day prayers). Of particular importance is the Non-formal Literacy and Numeracy Education Program instituted in the area in cooperation with the local church by an NGO, to be described in a subsequent section.

Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu: Lowland Farming and Fishing Communities

Calapan, the capital of Oriental Mindoro, is located on the northern coast of Mindoro Island, at the head of Calapan Bay 28 nautical miles from the nearest point of Batangas province in the Luzon Region. It has a total land area of 217.3 square kilometres, including five islets.

Calapan is primarily agricultural with about 90% of its total land area devoted to farming. Of this figure, about 1,300 hectares is devoted to inland fishing. Major crops are *palay* (rice), coconut, banana, citrus and vegetables. With intercropping and multicropping techniques, Calapan farmers are also able to produce corn and coffee.

Barangays Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu, the research sites for this study, are two of the sixty-two (62) barangays of the municipality.

Calamansi is approximately 13 kilometres from the town proper with a total land area of 2.3 square kilometres. It has six *puroks* or *sitios* where houses are concentrated. A total of 317 households, or a population of about 1,901 (1990 Census) comprise the barangay. Majority of the population is relatively young and unmarried, with slightly more than half (50.92%) composed of females and 49.07% males.

A complete elementary school is located at the centre of the *barangay*. It has a teaching force of 16 elementary school teachers making for a teacher-student ratio of approximately 1:35 in 1993. For every 100 students entering grade school, 50 finish elementary school and 9 finish high school. There is no problem with basic literacy, with only 0.5% of the population classified as non-literates, mostly from the above 40 age bracket.

The last non-formal literacy program conducted in the community was in the 1950s. The program stopped after a few months because of lack of participants and loss of interest to continue with the programme.

There appears to be an oversupply of unemployed high school graduates and undergraduates who work as part-time farmhands during planting and harvest season. They reported that they have forgotten most of the lessons taught while they were in school.

The current problem of the community is massive unemployment. At present there are no livelihood programs being conducted by the municipal government. The few school-based livelihood projects such as soap-making, *achara*-making (pickles), and fruit preservation did not take off due to low demand in the market. Other projects such as dressmaking and manicure-pedicure courses likewise did not prosper due to shortage of customers.

Some of the programs suggested by the respondents which should be initiated by the government in their barangay are the following: citrus concentrate factory (this was suggested when found out that the citrus they sell are made into citrus concentrates in Manila and sold back to Mindoro as packed juice drinks), citrus puree for export, new farming methods, and more farm-to-market roads.

Less than 2% earn more than P5,000 (US$200.00) monthly, the poverty threshold. The primary source of livelihood is farming, with rice as the dominant crop, followed by fruits and livestock. Prices for farm produce range only from low to average. Farmers use farm equipment like hand tractors and portable threshers but some still use the carabao for ploughing the fields. Fertilizers and insecticides are widely used and seed selection is widely adopted. However, there is little technical and financial assistance given to farmers.

Apart from agriculture, Calamansi has commercial establishments, including *sari-sari* stores, one rice mill, one iron works and one general merchandise store.

Social services include a health centre with a midwife and a trained Barangay Nutrition Scholar (BNS) who report twice a week. Health services include immunization, maternal health care, nutrition, general consultation, free medicine and family planning services. In 1991, some 130 cases of malnourished children were reported. For sports and recreation, the barangay has a multi-purpose cemented area which serves as a basketball and volleyball court, and as a venue for socials.

The community is relatively peaceful. When disputes do arise, these are settled by barangay officials.

Lapu-Lapu, the second community, is approximately three kilometres from Calapan town proper. It has a total land area of about 1.1 square kilometres divided into seven *puroks* or *sitios*. According to a survey conducted by the barangay council in July 1992, the total population is 2,127 covering 424 households.

About 70% of the working population are fishermen. The rest are government workers, tricycle drivers, vendors who are mostly women, and part-time workers. The average household income is about P100/day. Fishermen have no fixed income and can earn as much as P1,500/day or none at all, depending on the season. During the lean months for fishing (November to March), fishermen become stevedores at the pier.

Barangay Lapu-Lapu derives additional income from *copra* (dried coconut meat), backyard gardening, and poultry/swine raising.

Vegetable growing was initiated before as a supplementary means of livelihood but with no market available for their produce, people resorted to backyard gardening only for home consumption.

Two gasoline depots (Caltex and Shell) are located 500 metres apart near the shore. The barangay also has a church, a complete elementary school, a cemented basketball court, and a barangay hall which doubles as a health centre. Medical services are provided once a week by a health worker.

A more urgent need of the barangay for the moment is a cold storage plant to keep their catch fresh. This was expressed by the barangay captain and the fishermen present during the roundtable discussions. The ice-plant project has been estimated to cost about a million pesos but a more thorough study is needed to ensure the project's viability. An investigation conducted by the research team confirmed the need for cold storage in the *barangay*.

At present, the barangay needs livelihood programs to help it through. Findings from the roundtable discussions and individual interviews confirm the need for government to intervene and help put up livelihood projects for income generation. Literacy programs would be for naught if no viable means of employment are made available.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the lack of livelihood activities in these two communities result in a climate where literacy skills are not practiced or applied. Hence, the feeling of many that they have lost these literacy skills.

Magayon: a Lowland Farming Community

Founded in the early 1800s Magayon, Sorsogon did not become a duly constituted town until December 1879 by virtue of a Royal Decree. Today it has 28 barangays, five of which are classified as urban, and the remaining 23 as rural.

Magayon's total land area is 15,880 hectares, with a topography of rolling plains, hilly areas and some mountain peaks. Several creeks, rivers and streams are found in the area. Situated at the foot of a volcano, it has different soil types ideal for agriculture and pottery-making. In fact, 78% of the area is agricultural, making Magayon the rice granary, the citrus centre and the *abaca* producer of the province.

According to the 1990 census, Magayon has a total population of 37,887 of which about a third live in the urban areas and the rest in the rural areas. Of the total population, more than half or 19,383 are males. With a growth rate of less than 1% per annum, Magayon has a population density of 239 persons per square kilometre.

Municipal records show that 1,354 families or 21.24% of the total number of households of Magayon live below the poverty line. Fifty one percent of the total population are employed or self-employed. Economic activities include farming, swine and poultry raising, handicraft and pottery-making, and commercial activities in the public market, grocery stores, trading posts, rice mills and eateries.

For the present study, two barangays were chosen, namely: Bulusan and Mayon. Once a *sitio* of Mayon, Bulusan became an 18-hectare riverine barangay in the 1960's. Large portions of the total land area are owned by a few families who have partitioned and leased them to the poorer residents.

The population of Bulusan is reported to be 3,236 consisting of 1,132 males (34.98%) and 2,104 (or 65.01%) females. Some 50 residents are considered squatters. At the first roundtable discussion conducted by the research team, the problem of "internal refugees" (evacuees mostly female due to military-rebel operations) from the neighbouring province of Masbate was reported, probably explaining the disproportionate number of females to males.

According to the barangay captain, half of the working population are jobless. There are a few *sari-sari* (variety) stores. Some are employed in private and public offices and others are jar-makers, labourers, firewood vendors and small farmers.

Some residents are active members of co-operatives and people's organizations.

Mayon, the second *barangay* in Magayon is only slightly bigger in land area than Bulusan, with 18.92 hectares. Located at the centre of Magayon, it is the site of the parish church, the municipal building, the public auditorium and several commercial buildings. Other notable physical features are a 150-year old cement stairs leading up to the parish church, and the 14 stations of the cross surrounding this staircase. This is the site of the annual Holy Week celebration attended by majority of the population. From this vantage point, the valley of Magayon is clearly visible. The other side of the hill on which the parish church sits is where the poorer sector of the local population lives. However, the residents here own the small lots on which they have built their houses.

An urbanized *barangay* with 2,497 inhabitants and 457 households, Mayon has four rice mills, twelve wholesale and retail stores, one *copra* (dried coconut) and *abaca* (hemp) trading post, and numerous other commercial establishments, a government rice distribution centre, a telecommunications centre, and a rural bank. Most of the business establishments in the *barangay* are owned by only four families, two of whom are influential in politics as well.

There are several development projects in both barangays. Government-funded projects include a swine dispersal project, a day care centre, and sports facilities. The local government is funding the installation of security lights and the construction of a drainage system, low cost housing, roads and alleys. Community organizations have put up a barangay disaster centre while the Pastoral Council is involved in the improvement of the Catholic cemetery. Magayon also hosts six NGOs, four people's organizations and sixteen co-operatives.

A relatively progressive program of government has been drafted by the local government of Magayon:

> We envision (Magayon) as a peaceful, progressive and self-directing community that can maintain the life-sustaining quality of its environment, with people who are God-loving, gender-sensitive, healthy, productive and self-reliant, united by a system of governance that is just, responsive, efficient and participatory.

Several strategies towards the pursuit of this vision have been outlined. The livelihood development component includes the "equitable distribution of rural assets", environment-friendly and sustainable development, and agri-based industrialization. The people's empowerment component includes multi-sectoral co-operation and the development of human resources. The component on the provision of basic services includes health, education and sports, water supply, social welfare/nutrition, transportation/ communication, housing, light and power.

Moreover, the town's development agenda consists of a peace zone, a *jueteng-free* (a form of gambling) community, a model of co-operation among government, NGOs and people's organizations (GO-NGO-PO) and an agrarian reform community.

Magayon has a district hospital supplemented by one barangay health unit, two private clinics, one private hospital, 19 day-care centres, and nine barangay health stations. In all, the area is served by 10 doctors, 12 registered midwives and many *hilots* (local midwives).

Based on the number of people who have reached Grade 4, the literacy rate of Magayon has been plotted by the municipal government to be around 65.03%. (Note that this is much higher than the FLEMMS figure, see Table 4.) There is also a successful non-formal literacy project run by an NGO.

Palihan A and B: Farming Communities of the Central Plain

Pulilan, a municipality at the northeastern portion of Bulacan province, is 16 kilometres north of Manila and accessible by two principal highways in Luzon.

Pulilan is situated in a predominantly flat agricultural land of 40.73 square kilometres, 10% of which is for residence, commerce and industry, and 90 % is for agriculture. Main crops are *palay*, fruits, vegetables, poultry and livestock. A large portion of the produce is sold in the local and nearby municipality markets. Additional income is derived from fishing in the Angat River, fishing ground for the municipality's eight *barangays*. As of 1990, total population stood at 48,184 with a ten-year (1980–1990) average population growth of 2.37 percent.

Pulilan has a road network of 139.5 kilometres of concrete pavement which enables the residents in nearby barangays to bring their farm produce to the markets. Establishments are two rural and co-operative banks, six co-operatives, one pawnshop, and four lending institutions, which are accessible to the people. Telecommunication facilities are available.

FLEMMS established Bulacan as having the highest provincial functional literacy rate in the country (79.8 percent). Pulilan has 7 public and private pre-schools, 16 public and private elementary schools, and 4 public and private secondary schools. Tertiary education is served by extension programs of two public colleges. Another state college provides graduate education to elementary and secondary school teachers.

The history of Pulilan and its people is deeply-rooted in Catholicism. The town was established as a settlement in 1796 originally referred to as '*pulo ng ulan*' ("island of rain"). Later, it became known as San Isidro Labrador, after the patron saint of farmers, and finally as Pulilan. It became a municipality in 1908.

The municipality's Catholic character is manifested during *fiestas* (feasts), the most popular feast being that of San Isidro Labrador highlighted by a race and exhibition of decorated carabaos, and a religious procession which includes the carabaos. Other religious celebrations observed throughout the year are the Marian festivals, the Lenten season where flagellants join the processions and the passion of Christ is read; and lavish church weddings and baptisms. Because many convert to other sects, the Catholic Church has initiated renewal movements, and has formed pastoral councils and youth commissions.

Barangays Palihan A and B, the research sites, are two of the eight *barangays* of Pulilan.

Palihan A is a flatland farming community with an area of roughly 2.3 kilometres. It is linked to the town proper by well-paved barangay and municipal roads.

In addition to *palay*, people also plant fruits and vegetables and raise swine and poultry. Average reported monthly income of 81% of all families is a little over 3,000 pesos.

The family is a very significant unit in Palihan A. The nuclear family in Palihan A is very strong, intact, and self-reliant. A large majority of families are nuclear households, and no separations of husband and wife are reported.

The dynamics and patterns of relationships occurring in the family also define the degree, intensity and magnitude of individual members' participation or involvement in community activities. In sociocultural and political-civic activities, participants are the families, not individuals or organizations. However, there is a growing consciousness that political-civic participation positively affects livelihood. Thus, farmers and women's organizations appear to be gaining support and membership. More and more mothers now work outside the home to augment the family income.

The educational profile of both parents and children show that 30 children out of 100 have had post-secondary vocational and/or college education, while only 9 for every 100 parents obtained this level of education. Parents encourage their children to exceed their own educational attainment and show strong resolve to push their children to acquire higher education beyond.

The people in Palihan A consider their co-operative as an economic support system as well as their political-civic activity.

Palihan B is a community adjacent to Palihan A. Its physical features are similar to those of Palihan A. It is a small community made up of 353 households for a total population of 1,849.

As in Palihan A, the principal source of income is farming. The community has two medium-sized rice mills owned by prominent families. Income is augmented by operating and driving jeepneys, engaging in small-scale retail business (usually variety stores), and raising swine and poultry. A recent boost to the community is the newly-opened public market, and the subdivision adjacent to the market site.

Families in Palihan B exert an even stronger influence on its members. This is manifested in the activities of families which focus on livelihood-economic concerns. There are fewer community-wide activities taking place in the site than those occurring in Palihan A.

As in Palihan A, the focus of family activities is on agri-business due, among others, to Palihan B's strategic location along the main routes of provincial and national road networks.

The value of education to families is best illustrated by the fact that in spite of the absence of schools in the barangay, a very high percentage of the children go to elementary and secondary schools located in the town proper or in the nearby *barangay* about 11–12 kilometres away. Drop-out rates at elementary level are very low. No problems with literacy and numeracy skills are reported. Reading is a widely practised activity as shown in the number and variety of reading materials in both communities: books, magazines, newspapers and tabloids, pamphlets, brochures issued either by the government or private agencies, and comics. The chapel keeps notices of meetings, misalettes, and other religious and/or church-related posters. Individuals keep diaries, letters, and calendars, certificates.

Urban Poor Communities

Labasan and Martires: Marginal Communities in Metro Manila

Barangay Labasan is an agricultural land located on the boundary of Valenzuela and Kalookan, Metro Manila. Starting with only seven shanties in 1977, Labasan quickly grew to 476 shanties and 660 families with a population of 3,580 in 1987.

Physically, the barangay is divided into two sections: Retiro and Sto. Rosario, located on the other side of the North Diversion Road and geographically separated from the rest of the barangay by a creek. The two communities share one barangay captain.

Labasan is primarily a workers' community. But due to various retrenchments and scaling down of operations of many factories and businesses, many of the barangay's residents are currently jobless. In Sto. Rosario, 37% of the respondents are self-employed in such enterprises as goat-and pig-raising, and sewing. The capital for these was provided by the UNICEF in 1990 (the poorest families chosen by UNICEF were given P1,000 each as capital for livelihood projects). Fourteen percent are employed while 36% are unemployed. In Retiro, only 28% are self-employed, and 33% are unemployed. Often more than one member of the family, including the children, are involved in a variety of odd jobs and income-generating activities. The average combined daily income per family (for a family of six, and sometimes eleven to twelve, with 2–3 working members) is about P225.

Until the middle of 1993, no electric, water and garbage disposal services were available in the community due to the absence of service roads. According to the respondents, the absence of a service road was by far the most serious among the community problems, resulting in the dumping of community garbage along the highway. Only some 69% of the population have electricity, most of them from illegal connections. Twenty percent have water from the four deep wells in the barangay. Some 80% have toilets but there is no steady supply of water.

On a more positive note, the inhabitants of Sto. Rosario are technically no longer squatters. Acting on the community's request, the National Housing Authority (NHA) has already bought the land on which stands Sto. Rosario and it has been parcelled out among the community residents. Each plot has a title bought by the people of Sto. Rosario from the NHA at a relatively affordable instalment plan. Unlike most slum areas, the individual plots in Sto. Rosario have space not only for a small concrete house with galvanized roofing but also for a small backyard. Community sidestreets are of concrete, and residents have the use of a cemented basketball court. A multi-purpose hall is used for meetings and as a day care centre established with the help of the Department of Social Welfare (DSWD).

Almost all children attend the public elementary school located at Retiro. Some 60% of the schoolage population go to high school.

Because they have to go out to earn a living for the family, few older people are left in the house. The result is fighting among siblings and early marriage among the young. However, with the involvement of more family members in livelihood activities, fewer cases of drunkenness, gambling (*jueteng, pusoy* and *mahjong*), and bumming around or loitering in street corners, have been reported. Some sports activities and clean-up drives or projects have been initiated among the youth. Bible classes have also been set up in a little chapel built for the purpose.

Traditional activities, especially religious ones like the *Pasyon* (Passion of Christ), are observed by both the young and the old. In what seems to be a departure from tradition, *Pasyon* readers during the Lenten season are mostly young people. *Fiestas* and baptisms are also celebrated, often beyond the actual means of the residents. Many are said to borrow money from usurious lenders for these activities.

Residents of Sto. Rosario are relatively more politically aware than those in Retiro and their social consciousness is more marked. They are active in association activities and their unity has enabled them to negotiate successfully over local issues like land ownership, organized health programs and family planning seminars. The community is not without unscrupulous members, however. One respondent, for example, was reported to have sold the rights to the school and the community park.

Various community organizations exist in the area, five in Sto. Rosario, and two in Retiro. There are no literacy programs in either Sto. Rosario or Retiro.

The second urban poor community included in this study is Martires, a 2,000- square metre strip of land located on the fringes of a middle class subdivision. The community started in 1970 with just one family. Since then, it has grown to about 200 families with 1,800 people living in about 80 shanties. The mode of population expansion has primarily been the extension of families. Some residents have bought land rights from the NHA while others are renting.

Because of its proximity to a city centre, and some factories, many people have flocked to Martires, making overcrowding one of the community's major problems. Like the Labasan communities, the inhabitants of Martires are also plagued with economic problems. Nineteen percent of the population have no regular employment, while 44% have no work at all. Thirty percent earn a living by washing clothes, selling cooked food, driving tricycles, and selling cigarettes and newspapers. The average daily income is P115. An additional P130 a day may be added if the spouse and older child works as well. The average number of children is 3.1, although a couple of families in the area have 11 to 13 children, and up to three families live under one roof.

Only 5% of the inhabitants have water services and only 25% have toilet facilities. There is only one public toilet for over 200 families in the area, but electricity is available to all.

As in Labasan, most of the school-age children go to public elementary schools. Some 80% of high school age students attend public high schools while 12 individuals go to either private or public colleges. Very few enroll in vocational schools. No respondents indicated the presence of basic or functional literacy projects in the community.

Unlike the Labasan residents, the people of Martires have low social and political awareness and are not actively involved in community activities and organizations. There is little concerted effort, for example, to address the issue of housing and land ownership, and majority of the community folk have decided to remain "invisible" by not supporting efforts of the local association. Nonetheless, a local association has succeeded in persuading NHA to purchase the land and to sell it to the Martires residents at low cost. For this purpose, the residents have to situate their residences according to subdivision plots. Some recent comers will have to be removed to make room for new boundaries. Still others will have to leave because they had sold their rights to non-association members.

At Martires, the most glaring problem, according to 60% of the respondents, is the lack of livelihood and income opportunities. Twenty-one percent of the respondents expressed the need for overall development while 12% indicate health concerns as a priority. Some 7% indicated the need to improve family relations, as they perceive weak family relations to be a factor in the rise of drug addiction. The youth in the community are more active than adults in promoting community projects which revolve among others, around sanitation, land problems, and family problems.

Two Organized Developmental Communities

Inipon: a Community Radio Station for Community Building

Inipon, a fifth class agricultural town of 35,762 people, is situated on the Northern tip of the Luzon mainland along the coast of the Pacific Ocean. It has one of the largest and least developed land areas among the Philippine municipalities. Inipon lies squarely on the typhoon belt and has more than the usual share of destruction. To reach this town from Manila, one has to cross the Sierra Madre mountains through abominable roads. Average monthly income of farmers is from P1,500 to P2,000.

In this town the Catholic Church headed by a progressive-minded bishop remains one of the most powerful institutions. As one respondent commented, "*Kapag simbahan ang nagsasabi, sama-sama kami* (When the church speaks, we join)." There are a number of NGOs and sectoral organizations in the community (e.g., fisherfolk, women, vendors, farmers), espousing such issues as illegal logging, human rights violations and military operations occasioned by the presence of rebels in the Sierra Madre. For local issues, the community has dzJO, its only local radio station owned by the *Bayanihan* (meaning co-operative spirit) Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a non-stock, non-profit, semi-commercial entity run by the Prelature of Inipon.

The radio station (dzJO) has become a catalyst for social mobilization and community development by pioneering in participatory or community-based broadcasting. The station has introduced innovative programming schemes.

BBC is committed to the propagation of the *bayanihan* (helping each other and working together) spirit among the people of Inipon. A Christian radio station in rural Philippines, the station's personal approach in communicating with its listeners creates a close bond between the station and its listeners. Its stated mission is to contribute to nation-building through community-building.

As a community-based radio station, dzJO has four unique features: 1) there is a two-way communication whereby the community reacts to what they hear over the radio; 2) it is people-centred rather than program-centred; 3) it evolves and evokes people's participation and; 4) it adheres to issue-oriented programming, helping in the identification, analysis, diagnosis and clarification of national and local issues having immediate and direct impact on the community. Examples of its activities are: encouraging people to drop their letters at the radio station which then announces the names of the addresses on the air, involving community volunteers (after training) in broadcast production, asking community members to gather news from far-flung areas of the town, encouraging community folk to identify issues and air their opinions over the radio.

According to the station's news manager, a former ice cream vendor, the thrust of dzJO programming is "consciousness-raising" and people's mobilization. Community members are directly involved in broadcast production and program planning. dzJO believes that community broadcasting requires culture sensitivity and humility — willingness to listen and learn from the people (rather than only being listened to), acknowledging the wisdom of the local folk, even the unschooled. The concept of producing "with the people" recognizes the importance of combining technical expertise with people's knowledge on issues concerning them.

Since the people cannot by themselves produce quality programs because of technical considerations, the radio station espouses "doing things together", a partnership of mutual respect between the experts and the community folk.

Station dzJO is an information-oriented station devoting 69.35% of its total weekly broadcast time to news, public affairs and public service program. All its programs are aired in Filipino. Through the station's emphasis on information dissemination, public service and public forum formats, dzJO is able to perform its mission of conscientization and community mobilization.

In addition to news, public affairs and public service, dzJO has a magazine farm program which provides updates on market prices, farm technology, farm news and weather forecasts. Farmers have thus become less dependent on middlemen and unscrupulous traders to set farm prices. Another program serves as the youth's venue for the discussion of topics or issues concerning them.

Radio School is a weekly school-on-the-air program which discusses relevant issues, values, actions based on Bible reflection. These programmes involve community members through issue or topic identification and selection, prioritization of topics, actual production, evaluation and reflection. Started in 1977, it is now one of the longest running school-on-the-air programs in the country. "Listening groups" of 8-25 participants meet weekly to analyse and comment on the issue and discussion aired by the station. The facilitator and the documentor of the group then prepare a report for submission to the radio station which will then air the group's comments. After 52 sessions (one year), participants are given certificates of completion. There are now 30 such listening groups in Inipon.

DzJO redefines the role of radio in development through numerous means, by serving as a channel for redress of grievances, and by serving as the voice of the people. It lends credence to public accountability and transparency by broadcasting public transactions especially those prone to corruption. It is also a forum for dialogue wherein groups with divergent views on certain issues harmonize ideas or try to arrive at a consensus. A number of times, the station has aired dialogues between community leaders and representatives from the rebel New People's Army.

In addressing the needs of the community, it serves as a link for development services. The station is likewise concerned with conscientization and people empowerment by making the people more knowledgeable about certain issues. It encourages volunteerism on the part of the community and strengthens democratic principles and institutions through its participatory process in program planning and production. By serving as a communication centre, it links the far-flung barangays to the town centre of Inipon and to the rest of the country. It takes on a more innovative role aside from the traditional entertainment and information. As mobilizer of people for mass action, it has helped to organize fisherfolk to lobby against illegal fishing, and community folk to protest illegal logging and human rights violations. The people's support of this radio station is best illustrated by the fact that despite their poverty, their contributions helped finance the repair of the station's facilities which were damaged by the typhoons on several occasions.

The experience of dzJO illustrates the untapped potentials of radio for functional literacy and continuing education. It offers new hope especially to adults who have repeatedly "failed" in the traditional "paper and pencil" approach as even non-literates can participate in various learning experiences in participatory program planning and production. Its experiences show that radio is an effective medium in educating, conscienticizing and mobilizing the people. It has shown that even non-literates can participate in social mobilization and participation.

Corona: a People's Organization Educates its Members

Corona, in the province of Rizal, Luzon Region, is bounded by the towns of Binangonan and Morong and by Laguna Lake, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. The lake was once noted for its natural beauty and bounty. Today it is nearly an ecological disaster because of unsustainable fishing practices and toxic waste from the numerous industrial factories around the lake. Among the coastal towns, it is Corona that is most heavily dependent on the lake for its main source of income. An estimated 60% of its population of 33,967 is directly involved in fresh-water fishing. Despite the town's great natural resource, Corona is classified as a fifth class municipality, with problems of unemployment, overpopulation (3% annual growth rate) drug addiction and the imminent destruction of the lake.

Barangay Dalig, the research site for this study, is the centre of operations of the biggest people's organization (PO) in the region. Originally, it was just a confederation of small fishermen which an NGO helped to organize and develop. To respond to the major problem of lake degradation, the local organization expanded its membership to multi-sectoral groups — fisherfolk, women, youth, tricycle drivers, even children. The leadership saw the necessity of enlisting the help of all sectors to achieve the common goal of improving the situation of the lake, which is their main source of livelihood. From tackling the issue of the lake destruction, the organization's concerns now include current national issues such as the regulation of the fishing industry in the Philippines and protests against the transformation of agricultural areas into industrial zones.

"Towards a just and humane society" is the vision, mission and goal of this people's organizations, to be achieved through a process which empowers people to take greater control of their lives, determine priorities and take the necessary action by working together. According to the leaders, all its organized learning experiences are linked to this vision, mission and goal. It focuses on total human development to achieve equitable social development. They believe that real participation can only occur when people are in a position to develop their own alternatives and make decisions.

Limited formal education among the members has not posed a hindrance to active participation in the various undertakings of the organization. The present head of the organization's communication program is an elementary school drop-out at Grade 2 who taught himself to read and write in the course of his participation in the organization's activities. Continuing education including functional literacy is integral to the organization's activities although there is no separate literacy program. In their experience, the function of education is real, its indispensability confronting them along the road to development and their participation in achieving it.

Organized groups are venues for training from which an individual can derive experiences which help him/her deal better with his/her own life. Activities of the organization provide learning experiences to community leaders and members in community organizing, problem-solving, advocacy, and social mobilization. Aside from these, there is also a scholarship program for deserving students who would like to pursue further studies. The organization has been able to establish linkages with some schools and universities in Metro Manila for this purpose. Linkages have also been set up with other organizations in other fishing communities.

The organization regularly conducts seminars and training for its members and officers on leadership, organization, ecology/environment, art classes for the youth, livelihood, accounting and bookkeeping. Learning modules have already been developed by leaders and members. Aside from these, the use of group media offers ample opportunities for learning as well.

The need for a communication program was recognized in 1984 as the organization grew bigger. With the help of a school based in Manila, the members were trained in the production and use of group media, for instance, how to produce their own newsletter, and to document their own activities through photography and other media formats. They were also initiated into the rudiments of participatory research. What prodded leaders to create a communication program was the growing gap between leaders and members in terms of their perspectives or levels of knowledge on issues concerning their communities and the fishing industry. They established a communication program called REDP, with three main components: research, education and documentation.

From their experience in communication, they have identified three elements as critical to the process of evoking people's participation: 1) participation in the production phase; 2) the message or content should be reflective of the realities (e.g., lake issues); and 3) the medium should be used for consciousness-raising, organization building and expansion.

Their publications have become a venue for leaders and members to ventilate their grievances, demands and opinions on issues affecting them. Kalayagan (the sail) is a newsletter prepared by REDP. Representatives from each area gather updates and write news or feature stories on events and activities taking place within the area. Even the children are encouraged to participate through their illustrations, and the distribution of the newsletter.

Education is a significant aspect in the development process as indicated by the organization's emphasis on learning as the bottom line of all its activities. However, there is no non-formal education program as such. But perhaps there can be no better non-formal education than that being provided by the organization, access to which continues to be open to everyone.

The people's organization in Corona is indicative of a "mobilized" community which has helped its members by providing them with the skills and knowhow necessary for mobilization, advocacy and networking. It has also given other marginalized sectors the chance to participate in the process of becoming an organized, conscienticized community.

Summary

The foregoing presentation shows that a number of characteristics are shared by the communities: 1) a predominantly young population; 2) the kinship basis of the settlements except for the urban poor areas; 3) economic depression with majority of the population living below the poverty line; and 4) dearth of social services including education.

Yet, even the most cursory reading of the ethnographic sketches will reveal the subtle and often ignored differences in the rhythm of community life which we have conceptualized earlier as being made up of three elements: 1) in the nature of relations among the community members and the ties that bind them as a community; 2) the processes of continuity or change that characterize the life of the community; and 3) the community activities in the three aspects of livelihood-economic, socio-cultural and political-civic.

These elements have important implications to the understanding of literacy practice within each community for they influence not only the meanings and practice of literacy but also the uses of literacy and therefore the motivations for becoming literate. In this summary we highlight the first and second elements; the third element is discussed at length in a subsequent chapter.

If we range the communities by type, from the most traditional to the most developmental, as preliminarily defined in chapter 1, what is most striking is the fact that the communities at both ends of the typology (Types 1 and 6) are those whose members clearly understand the nature of the relations among them. These are also the communities which have adopted community symbols which in fact are metaphors of these relations.

In Boheh Umos, all the metaphors carry the same meaning: the *pehak* or fish gonad, eggs tightly packed together and covered with a protective membrane; the *kumkuman* or handgrip, this metaphor also physically expressed in the housing pattern on the strand; the injunction "What I eat is what you eat". In Corona, the metaphor is *Kalayagan* (the sail), metonym for boat, going forward together as in a journey (here echoing the racial memory of ancient Malay ancestors who came to the islands on a *balanghay* or boat), sometimes encountering *alon* (waves), symbolizing problems to be met.

The Boheh Umos metaphor is static, and this too explains in part the continuity of the Sama social organization from antiquity to the present. A whole village can disappear in the face of a threat but it survives because community members remain together. The Corona metaphor suggests movement forward even as the members recognize that there will be problems along the way. Nonetheless, and this is the important point, both sets of metaphors emphasize the bonds among the members, the notion of equality and equal access to knowledge, a common goal — on one hand, in order to stay together (as in a grip or with a common protective membrane as in a fish gonad); on the other, in order to move forward in the solution of common problems (i.e., first the degradation of the lake and later the problems of the fishing industry) in order to move forward (as in a common boat with a single sail).

The practice of literacy in the sense of reading and writing in an oral society like Boheh Umos is nil, but members are literate in their traditional lore and everyone has access to it. The practice of literacy (in the sense of reading and writing) in the second community, Corona, is vastly increased, for the issues to be understood and the actions that need to be taken together need new information and knowledge mostly in print, and therefore everyone must have the literacy skills to obtain access to knowledge under a situation of participatory democracy. The whole organization in Corona therefore becomes an educative organization although no literacy or education program as such exists.

In between these two community types are communities with varying clarity about their relations to one another. The two tribal communities are transitional, not only in the way they manage the encounter of the traditional and the modern in their community life, but also in the way they define themselves as community. In Alaga, apart from some common reference to local heroes and traditions, there appears to be no singular basis for community. Activities are not communal primarily because houses and swidden farmers by necessity are situated far apart from one another. The loss of identity due to the change of names from archaic (*ligbok*, which carry their own commonly understood meanings) to Christianized probably exacerbates the absence of a commonly understood basis for community. Continuity cannot be ensured by the precariousness of their lives as swidden farmers, while the absence of a basis for community explains the lack of capacity to internally generate a process of change. Thus, all the change elements appear to be externally generated: development projects, presence of the military and the rebels: both of whom they fear, the recent establishment of a school. In this situation, community members begin to express doubts about their own practices and are pinning their hopes on education, including literacy, to improve their lives.

Among the Ifugao of Kala, the long experience in sedentary agriculture in a well-established rice terracing system requiring communal work in order to construct and maintain the *payew* (rice terraces) on a massive scale helps to define the relations among community members. Thus, much of community life remains communal, supported by reference to common deities, ritual feasts and traditional lore to which everyone has access and therefore without requirement for literate practice (in the sense of reading and writing). It is in this context that we understand the anxiety of people in Kala that "participation in literacy programs might take people away from their work", particularly where its content has nothing to do with the agricultural system which they practise.

The migration of people to other areas on account of poverty, as well as the new practices and meanings introduced by Westernized education and some progressive elements present some problems but it is clear that the Ifugao of Kala are better able to manage these transitions than do their counterparts in Alaga.

The second type of transitional community, represented by two communities (Sta. Rosa and Loob) are experiencing an extreme form of transition — being uprooted from their communities by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. In a very real sense, these are not yet communities or natural social formations; these are just individuals, families or households who happen to be together in the refugee camp or resettlement areas. Thus, strictly speaking there are no community relations as such, and this is well demonstrated by the report of a general aimlessness ("We do nothing"), and the constant visits to the presumed sites of their old communities. In this situation, the inward process of strengthening relations with family members, reported in both sites, is entirely to be expected. Also, in this situation of disrupted communities, literacy practice is nil, even where residents are reported to have adequate literacy levels.

In the Moslem Filipino community, the basis of community is Islam and its practices, and this too defines the way the members, as a group, view their relations to the dominant Christian majority whose presence in mass media, in education, in the very definition of literacy impinges itself on community life although the Christians are not physically dominant in the community. The ambivalence of their attitudes towards education and literacy is very apparent, defined no doubt by these relations.

The four lowland rural groups belong to the Christian majority but nonetheless they lead a marginal existence because of the generally unequal distribution of wealth in the Philippines (with the highest inequality ratio in Southeast Asia). The main bases of community life are the family, the practice of Christianity and elections. Thus, most community activities are of a religious (e.g., fiestas observed to honour local patron saints, Holy Week) or political nature (i.e., elections), while the family, both nuclear and extended, remains a solid basis of self-identification.

Participation in religious celebrations in the modality of *fiestas* requires no literate practice, for indeed the traditional practice of Catholicism does not include Bible reading. Bible studies and reading of the liturgy for Sunday Mass are of relatively recent origin started by progressive Church elements after Vatican II. Election practice does not require extensive literate practice either (as will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter) because except in the more highly educated and the emergent progressive sectors, elections in the Philippines continue to be generally defined by generalized patron-client relations or family-based loyalties, not by issues or political platforms.

However, across these rural Christian group, differences in processes of continuity or change can be observed, with resulting effects on literacy practice. Exploitative worker-landlord working conditions in the sugar plantations of Magdalena have been the cause for support of rebel groups, while heightened awareness of these conditions have encouraged greater numeracy practice to avoid underpayment. In Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu, community life remains stagnant (no development projects, little capacity for generating change) and literate practice is not active and widespread, even as literacy levels are adequate. In Magayon, with the plans for development projects as well as the organization of sectoral groups requiring more people's participation, literate practice could become more extensive even as the continued dominance of a few families in both business and politics may be constraining elements. In Palihan, family-based agri-business development as well as determined efforts to educate the children well beyond basic elementary levels have resulted in more extensive literacy practice.

Among the urban poor groups, the practice of numeracy is evident on account of exposure to the urban cash economy, but lacking in a singular basis for community life, the typical urban problems (drug addiction, broken families) arise. Literate practice is apparent, in the form of reading comics and pornographic materials in Filipino but not of more serious informative materials which are in English.

However, in the other urban poor community (Labasan), active support of and participation in a local organization have resulted in major changes in the community: opening up a service road and ownership of small lots upon organized representation before the Housing Authority.

The two developmental communities, while still poor and marginalized, are markedly different from the other groups. Here, the processes for change are more internally generated (with the initial help of catalysts) and people participate more fully in community life: in Inipon through the community radio station which has done much to generate literate practice as well as issue-oriented mass actions, and in Corona through the politicization of community members towards the solution of common problems. In these two communities, the capacity for people to take control of their lives and participate in concerted action has engendered a practice of literacy that appears to be sustainable, and in the end, developmental.

These then are the various contexts of community life within which literate practice is situated in the Philippines. In the next chapter, we delineate the community knowledge in the community types in the course of their passage to a literate tradition.

CHAPTER IV

Community Knowledge and the Passage to a Literate Tradition

In Scribner and Cole's definition of practice, three principal elements, referred to in chapter 1, are included: 1) the set of activities, 2) the technology used, and 3) the knowledge which gives meaning to both. The first and second elements will be discussed in chapter v. In this chapter, we analyse community knowledge, conceptualized in the Philippine context as of two types: 1) literate knowledge which is generally learned in school, or from printed material, or requiring some form of reading or writing; and 2) traditional knowledge derived mainly from an oral tradition and consisting of beliefs, practices, norms, attitudes, values, world views and information. From the point of view of the present research, this classification highlights the essential difference between the two types of knowledge.

The principal questions asked at this point are: 1) the functions of community knowledge in daily life and activities, 2) the relation, if any, between the two types of knowledge, and 3) the extent to which literate practice enters or does not enter into the use, reproduction, modification and expansion of these two types of knowledge. These questions are critical in the Philippine context given the history of how writing in the Roman script was introduced into the country, and how literacy in this context relates to property, knowledge, educational provision and language.

A Brief Historical Sketch on the Relation of Property, Literacy, Language and Knowledge

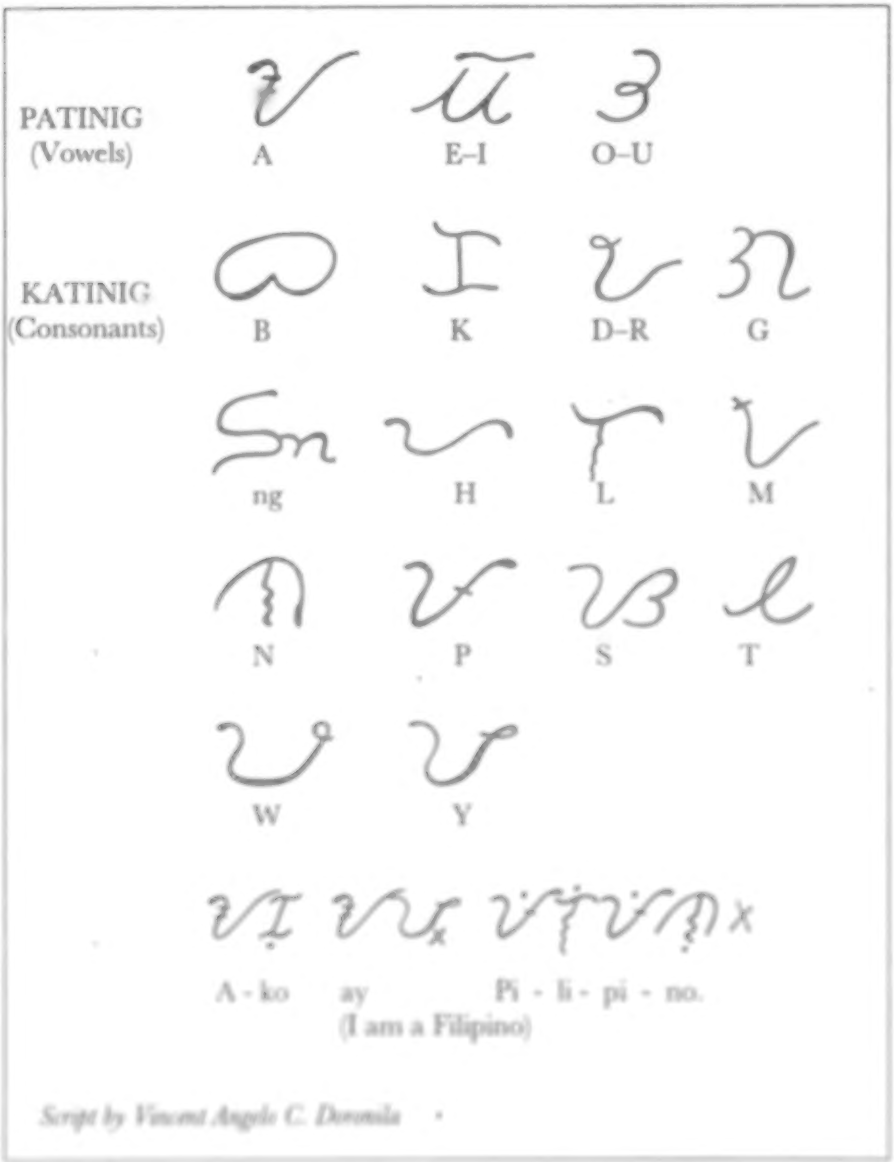
Before the Spanish colonial period which began in the 16th Century, Filipinos already had their own native script called *alibata* (alphabet).

Writing materials were bamboo, tree barks, leaves and sometimes smooth stones, a sharp, pointed instrument called *sipol*, and ink from plants. This phonetic alphabet had three vowels and fourteen consonants. Every consonant is understood to be followed by the vowel *a*. If a consonant has a mark on top, *a* becomes *i*; if the mark is at the bottom, *a* becomes *o* or *u*. A small *x* mark after a consonant means that it is pronounced without the vowel *a*. A big *X* at the end marks the end of a sentence. A vowel is written only if it is the initial letter of a word. A handful of tribal communities still know this script but do not generally use it. Figure 2 shows the Philippine *alibata*; a sample sentence written in this script is also given.

Spanish friars branded this alphabet as the "handiwork of the devil", burned a lot of written materials in the process, introduced the Roman script and rendered whole populations illiterate in the new script. Various colonial decrees in the 16th and 17th centuries ordered the teaching of the Spanish language but the powerful Spanish religious orders, who were in charge of the indoctrination of the Filipinos into Christianity and of what little education was offered, continuously defied these decrees and instead taught the Christian doctrine in the local languages using a Romanized script (Corpuz, 1989). It may be argued that the deep roots of Catholicism in the country spring from the fact that Filipinos learned it in their own language, indigenizing it into "folk Catholicism" in the process, as will be shown in this chapter.

Those who fled to the hills, refusing colonization, remained illiterate in the new script although it must be said that many among those who remained did not become literate either, owing to the lack of schools and the prevailing pedagogy of the friars which emphasized rote learning and memorization. Filipino Moslems in the South, earlier Islamized in the 14th Century, learned Arabic to read the Qur'an and resisted Spanish colonization. To this day, the writing of their local languages in the Romanized script is not encouraged. Tribes in the virtually inaccessible Cordillera mountains of the North also resisted Spanish colonization but were much later introduced to the Roman script using English, largely taught by American Protetant missionaries (Taka and Kala, included in this study are in the Moslem and Cordillera areas, respectively).

Figure 2: The Philippine *Alibata*


PATINIG
(Vowels)
A
E–I
O–U
KATINIG
(Consonants)
B
K
D–R
G
ng
H
L
M
N
P
S
T
W
Y
A - ko
ay
Pi - li - pi - no.
(I am a Filipino)

Script by Vincent Angelo C. Doronila

When the Spaniards introduced the concept of private ownership of land (from a largely communal type of ownership), members of the *principalia* (native nobility who had earlier been co-opted to become collectors of tribute for the Spanish crown) were the first to recognize its value (Ofreneo, 1980). Being literate in both Spanish and in the native Romanized script was important for the land titling process. Together with the friars and Spanish administrators, they started to accumulate large tracts of land at the expense of the actual tillers, many of whom were reduced to landless and debt-ridden share croppers (Ofreneo, 1980).

The children of the native elite had a chance to study in schools originally established for the children of the Spanish colonial administrators (*peninsulares*), learning Spanish and Western (European) knowledge in the process.

The arrival of the American colonizers in the late 19th century on the eve of the Philippine revolution against Spain, and their subsequent occupation of the Philippines after the Treaty of Paris did not substantially change the country's agrarian structure. The elite who joined the masses in the revolution against Spain in the late 19th Century reneged on their agreement to pursue agrarian reforms; instead, they were co-opted by the American colonial administration and were able to retain their landholdings. The agrarian structure continues to be the single most important issue in Philippine society, and the principal motivator of unrest.

The Americans established a more widespread mass education system in which English was used as the medium of instruction, using textbooks essentially derived from those in the United States. But the children of the elite, already proficient in Spanish, continue to study to this day in private sectarian schools of better quality, where they are not only exposed to Spanish (in some schools) but to better quality English instruction and the knowledge content that go with it. This is the reason why the elite in the Philippines are much more Westernized than the marginal community folk, much better educated, and generally proficient in Spanish and English. When policy makers say that illiteracy is usually equated with poverty, the relation is essentially correct but it is important to understand how people became both poor and illiterate in the first place.

The relations among property, literacy in the Roman script, the languages in which it is learned, and the knowledge accessible in a given language constitute the proper contexts for the understanding of the differences in community knowledge and literate practice.

Community Knowledge Across Community Types

Community Knowledge and the Oral Tradition

Our data on community knowledge, as defined, come from six community types, all marginal, in the sense of education, ownership of property particularly land, extent of literacy in either the Romanized script or in Arabic, and proficiency in English. The ethnographic sketches in the preceding chapter, as well as related data from additional research instruments show the general paucity of printed material in English, Filipino and the local languages, but particularly in the latter. Public schools, wherever they are found, are not only incomplete but also underserved in facilities, teacher qualifications and instructional materials. In these schools at the elementary and high school levels, following current language policy, all subjects are taught in Filipino, supplemented by the local language, except for Mathematics and Science which are taught in English. The paucity of printed material in Filipino for those subjects taught in this language is marked, while for Mathematics and Science, much more are available including textbooks. Library resource materials if available are generally in English.

In the communities at large, the following printed types of material are generally available, except in Boheh Umos (community of sea nomads): 1) comic books for rent mainly in Filipino but some in English; 2) streamers, calendars, posters, billboards for advertisements, announcements and political campaigns, in Filipino but some in English; 3) newspapers for sale, in English but some in Filipino or Cebuano in Southern Philippines; 4) pocketbooks for rent, mainly in Filipino, some in English; 5) brochures and pamphlets from government agencies (e.g. soap-making, agricultural techniques); 6) the Qur'an for the Muslim communities in Arabic, more widespread than the Holy Bible (in English and some in Filipino) is in Christian communities; 7) textbooks if children are in school, in English or in

Filipino according to the medium of instruction; and 8) magazines for rent especially on movie stars and entertainment, in Filipino and some in English. Other more specialized materials are found in schools, offices and government agencies, mostly in English. No reading centres were reported in any of the research sites. Radio is widespread and the most popular programs reported are on entertainment and news, mainly in Filipino. Television is generally not available except in more affluent homes but the same preference for entertainment and news is reported.

Respondents from our traditional, mainly oral community (Sama of Boheh Umos) were unable to answer questions on their literate and traditional knowledge. They said: "What we know is how we live."

With some prodding, some sayings were given by respondents mostly on childbirth and health, as well as some Sama folk songs. The blending of knowledge and practice in this community is best illustrated in this (abbreviated) account of a shark-hunting Sama expedition reported by the researcher on site (Han, 1993):

> A shark-hunting *munda'an* (expedition) is participated in by two or more *komkoman* and organized by the *botang mat'toa* of the participating groups. At a meeting organized for the purpose, the *botang mat'toa* pool their views and give advice to the participants (all male) where to fish, how to deal with emergencies, what troublesome areas must be avoided, where to seek refuge and what prayers and rituals must be observed. Then decisions are made on which *pelang* (boats) to be used, whose *leha* (sails) are available, who will contribute to finance the trip, which *sukih* (partner to provide capital, mainly Chinese) to contact. A *nakurah* (leader of the fishing expedition) is then elected by consensus based on physical prowess, knowledge of navigation and climatology, good leadership, reputation and conduct. The oldest *botang mat'toa* in the group is usually given the privilege to appoint a day and time of departure. He is believed to be able to "divine" the trip from previous knowledge, experience and meditation. The technique of divination is referred to as *niundah* ("to see"). On the day of departure, the community bids goodbye to the fleet with ritual songs and traditional gestures of farewell.
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> Each man in the fleet knows his specific duties, as assigned by the *nakurah*, the best men being assigned to operate the harpoon.

> The *munda'an* returns as soon as the catch is calculated to make up for the expenses of the trip, with some surplus. Its arrival is met again with songs and traditional gestures of welcome. At nightfall, the men of the expedition gather at a meeting, presided again by the oldest *botang mat'toa*. A small part of the catch is offered to the *uhmbo* (ancestral spirit) whose "house" is a small house-like structure about 12 feet high and visible to all.
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> The *sukih* comes with his abacus (Chinese calculator), and he is involved in the weighing and distribution of the cash equivalent of the catch in the full view of all participants. The role of the *sukih* in this transaction, is crucial because the Sama only count whole numbers (no fractions or percentage) up to a thousand. Larger amounts are referred to as *sagamun sagindai* (like locks of hair intertwined, therefore *ad infinitum*). He calculates the cash equivalent of the expenses for the trip, and how much an individual should get from what is left. These known, the *nakurah* takes over, suggesting, for example, that one member should have a little more share because his *leha* or *pelang* or gas lamp was used. The other men also suggest that the *nakurah* as leader should get a little more, with voluntary deductions from each member. The *sukih* and his abacus are regarded as the final judge of the mathematical computations.
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> The meeting ends with embraces and bear hugs, reinforcing trust, confidence, affection and solidarity.

In this account, we see the interrelations of social organization, tradition, ritual, technology, and oral knowledge under conditions of equity, communalism, and general accessibility of knowledge. The role of various experts is recognized: the *botang mat'toa* for his wisdom, age and experience and affinity with the divine; the *nakurah* for his leadership, conduct and expertise in shark-hunting; the *sukih*, the only non-Sama involved in the transaction, for his abacus and expertise in mathematical operations. It may well be asked why the Sama have not undertaken to learn to operate the abacus so they could perform the computations themselves. Perhaps they have. But in the context of the account just given, the role of the *sukih* is not simply to compute but also as an objective third party to transactions that have the potential to create divisiveness and tension within the tightly knit Sama community.

Thus, in interpreting the community knowledge reported from the other sites where forms of literate knowledge have been introduced through the schools, print and other media, it would be instructive to consider the encounter between literate and traditional oral knowledge (the latter as manifested in Sama practice), what this means to literate practice (in the sense of reading and writing), and the role of experts or wise men/women in this encounter.

Community Knowledge and Literacy Practice in Transitional Communities

The Ifugao of Kala, practitioners of extensive rice-terracing agriculture since pre-colonial times, report both very little traditional and literate knowledge. On the other hand, the Bukidnon of Alaga, report extensive traditional knowledge and little literate knowledge. These were totally unexpected by us. We had assumed that because they live in a relatively "traditional culture, they would have a lot to say about it". But we might begin to understand the data if we use the Sama data (above) as baseline in trying to trace the route of community knowledge in the oral tradition, in the context of social change across communities. To use Boheh Umos as baseline is to assume that in Boheh Umos we have a contemporary example of how Philippine communities began as oral communities.

If we understand the inability of the Sama to report on their traditional knowledge because "what (they) know is how (they) live", the same explanation could be applied to the Ifugao of Kala. As in the Sama data, some songs are reported, as well as some specific instructions to be followed in childbearing, cooking and health practices. For literate knowledge, no formulas (e.g. square, rectangle, etc.) are reported, but a few report reading of instructions on fertilizers and pesticides, reading of newspapers, the Bible and barangay notices, simple arithmetic computations, and memorization of addresses of relatives, prayers as well as English songs learned in school.

However, the reports of the researchers on site (Alangui, 1993; Cariño et al 1994) provide us with data on the knowledge and practices associated with rice terracing agriculture. We soon realized from the report that the extensiveness and sophistication of the knowledge on the construction, repair and maintenance of the *payew* (rice terraces) naturally precludes reporting of discrete beliefs, practices or values about rice terracing agriculture on the part of the Ifugao of Kala. Here is the researchers' (abbreviated) account:

> In contrast with the technical and formal way of dating rice terracing activities, the indigenous cognitive system integrates economic necessities and physical givens reinforced by mythology as explanations for the origin of extensive terracing activities. Time is reckoned from a generational history as basis for dating the terraces.
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> Builders consider both physical and social factors in this agricultural activity. Physical considerations include abundance of water, availability of stones for walling their terrace, slope, soil quality; social factors include performance of rituals and availability of labour force, to name a few.
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> The set of activities, technology or tools, rituals, calendar and explanations for rice-terracing practice are extensive. Social institutions supporting the activity include the family and clan for production, maintenance and division of terrace parcels as well as arbitration of conflict; the group of tribal elders who preside over the resolution of conflicts involving terrace boundaries and irrigation; the *ubbo* or system of co-operation drawn up by members themselves who take turns in working in each one's *payew* (rice terraces); the rituals marking each stage of the agricultural cycle, providing reassurance of good harvest and solutions to natural calamities and pests.
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> Except in some parts where court settlements are already being resorted to, the elders in the community play central roles in conflict resolution.
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> Anybody can own a *payew*, by inheritance or purchase. An emerging pattern is private ownership supported by tax declarations or titles, but kin/clan-based ownership remains. The sale of terraces, however, is not widely practised and then only to relatives because they are viewed as very valuable, to be resorted to only in dire need. Otherwise, a practice similar to the mortgage system exists, in which a *payew* is used as collateral. The *payew* reverts to the owner when the loan is paid. Social sanctions exist for those who sell their *payew* to outsiders.

This knowledge is not to be found in printed material used in schools or other places, and therefore not discussed (except in ethnographic accounts not generally found in small school libraries). It continues to be transmitted by oral tradition to the heirs of the *payew* owners and the other community folk. However, in view of the relatively longer exposure of the Kala community to schools, government offices and Christian life since the turn of the century, literate knowledge with its attendant literate practice is apparent, as in the use of tax declarations or land titles, as well as in the use of the government courts for settlement of conflicts. However, the actual practice of rice-terracing, their main economic activity, from construction to maintenance, continues in the oral tradition.

In the course of this research, the researcher on site recorded the amicable settlement of a case of attempted rape which illustrates the successful integration of literate and traditional knowledge. Here is the researcher's account (Alangui, 1993):

> The incident which took place in December 1993 involved Joan, a married woman, who accused her brother-in-law Felipe of attempted rape. Joan filed a complaint before the *barangay* (lowest political unit of government) captain.
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> A trial was held in Felipe's house, in the presence of families of the complainant and defendant, the *Lupong Tagapayapa* (Justice Council of the Local Government), neighbours, witnesses and t*he mumbaki* (ritualist). At the start of the trial, an opening prayer, said in *Kalanguya*, the native tongue, was led by the *mumbaki*. The Barangay Captain who presided over the trial then cross-examined both the complainant and defendant. When the latter pleaded guilty, the Captain then turned to the crowd to determine Felipe's punishment. One man suggested that Joan be allowed to determine Felipe's penalty, to which everyone agreed. Joan's inability to specify an appropriate penalty prompted the Captain to turn to the *mumbaki* for advice. This is what Ama Hagabi said:
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>> Felipe should be penalized by butchering chicken to feed people gathered here today. Also he should give Joan a pig of regular size to be butchered at Joan's house for a *baki* (done on the following day). In addition to the pig, Felipe should pay whatever

> expenses were incurred by Joan while she was working on the case.

> After everyone present agreed that this was a suitable arrangement, a handwritten document was drawn up to be signed by both the complainant and defendant, the *Lupong Tagapayapa* (Justice Council), the Barangay Captain, a councilman, one relative of Joan and one relative of Felipe. The Captain then requested the *Lupon*, relatives of both parties, the *mumbaki*, and the others present, to give their advice to Felipe. He also consoled and advised Felipe's wife Marina. Joan also approached Marina to explain her motives for filing the case and to tell Marina not to leave Felipe because of the incident.

> The trial ended with a ritual prayer led by the *mumbaki*. This was followed by the praying of the Christian rosary, after which food was served for everyone.

> As far as literate practice is concerned, the only written document in this whole account is the agreement at the end of the trial.

Aside from the elders, two other experts or wise men identified by respondents are: 1) the *mumbaki* who reported that he is consulted especially during ritual feasts, by interested young people and professionals from the town, and by foreign researchers, and 2) the barangay captain, who himself expressed belief and respect for the elders in conflict resolutions and for the *baki* (rituals) in times of sickness, reported that his sphere of expertise is on matters related to government as well as to natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes) when he has to relate to provincial relief agencies. Note the clear lines of distinction of expertise delineated by both the *mumbaki* and the barangay captain.

Several observations can be made from these data: 1) traditional knowledge centred on the practice of rice-terracing agriculture which is very important to their economic and social life remains relatively whole and oral; 2) literate knowledge learned in school has almost no function in these activities, although literate knowledge associated with the courts is slowly being integrated with traditional knowledge; 3) literate practice remains very limited; and 4) mutual enrichment of traditional and literate knowledge is very slow on account of the discontinuity of literate practice. Regarding this last observation, some

Kala respondents expressed interest in technical material related to agriculture in view of the fact that in these areas, rice production in the *payew* is no longer adequate for population needs; but these are mostly available, if at all, in English. Still, the problem of "fit" remains, as has been pointed out by Bonifacio (1994) in a review of problems, issues and trends in technology transfer:

> If the interest is really to find the "fit" between innovation and farmers' practice, the conceptual framework will have to be different. Basically, a program of technology transfer must depart from the premise that the technology to be transferred is necessarily superior to the old method and that the tradition of farmers will have to be transformed. Instead, the approach must deliberately and judiciously map out all the technologies being used in the production systems. Once this is done, the question to be addressed is how the technical resources of the production systems can be improved, with emphasis on improvement and not on change.

In Alaga, the Bukidnon practise shifting swidden agriculture in a very marginal subsistence economy involving production of rice, corn, coffee and banana, the latter two being raised as cash crops. The data on community knowledge from this site reveal the following patterns: 1) more traditional knowledge than was reported in Kala and minimal literate knowledge but more than was reported in Kala; 2) subtle variation in traditional knowledge reported across age groups; and 3) a wider range of experts or wise persons chosen by the respondents. These patterns will be discussed together.

Traditional knowledge among the Bukidnon may be classified into three types: 1) a wide body of songs, stories, magic words and riddles, with some *babaylan* (shaman), keeper of the traditional lore, able to recite whole epics; 2) herbal lore and practical advice, and 3) animistic beliefs and practices meant to propitiate environmental and ancestral spirits. Some of the latter are mixed with Christian signs and symbols.

The folklore comes in many forms: *sugilanon* (oral epics), chants and songs, *dilot* (love songs), *talida* (repartees), *bisuyan* and *composos* (ballads) which are forms of contemporary oral history narrating important events such as the World War II and an encounter between the military and the New People's Army. If one examines the folklore mentioned across age groups, it will be noted that it is the older folk who mention most of these, with the younger ones mentioning more modern titles of songs and stories learned from schoolbooks; those in the 19 and below age group mention titles of some simple poems and stories in English (e.g., *Jack and Jill*, *The Three Billy Goats*).

The recourse to ancestral and environmental spirits with corresponding explanations is more marked in the above 40 age group. Good spirits are given offerings; evil ones need to be repelled or propitiated (e.g., asking permission from spirits when passing through the forest, sharp objects and live charcoal or torches to repel evil spirits, offerings of food or calling ancestral spirits before meals). Sometimes, the Christian Cross or similar symbols are used as signs or objects that would repel evil spirits or ensure good harvest (e.g. light a candle near the seeds and pray for good harvest; make the sign of the cross before fishing to drive away evil spirits). With younger respondents the recourse to environmental and ancestral spirits decreases but practical advice on the weather, the agricultural cycle, hunting and fishing remain, as does herbal lore which is very extensive (e.g., a combination of leaves for their astringent and antiseptic qualities after childbirth, and other kinds of leaves for various other diseases). The popularity of the *arbularyo* (herbalist) over the doctor, if available, is explained by a respondent in this way: "Doctors heal physical illness; the *arbularyo* knows if the illness is caused by spirits."

Literate knowledge, on the other hand, appears to be limited to barangay notices and those associated with the market: computation, lists of debts, calculation of board feet for lumber, use of weighing scale, liquid measures for cooking oil, and kerosene. Many have memorized the addresses of relatives and Christian prayers while some reported having memorized the multiplication tables. As in the case of Kala, there appears to be little interaction between traditional and literate knowledge, especially since the incomplete elementary school has just been established in the area. One possible limited interaction is in modes of measurement and weight, where standard measures are not available. In these instances, either traditional measuring methods are used (e.g. *dangaw-dangaw* or finger-length measure, *dupa* or arms' length) or available equivalents for modern concepts of measurement (e.g., one *dyna* is equivalent to one gallon, *dyna* being the trade name of oil that is sold by the gallon). Government development projects generally do not increase literate practice because of lack of participation of the people in the planning and decision-making prior to implementation.

In the case of experts or wise men in the community, a wider range than in Kala is noted particularly in the below 40 age group. The barangay captain, the arbularyo and the tribal chief are mentioned in all age groups but younger respondents already included policemen, CAFGU (member of a vigilante group against NPA), a midwife, the head of the reforestation unit, the school teacher.

Because of their present uprooted condition, respondents in the disaster communities of Sta. Rosa and Loob were not asked to report their community knowledge, only their livelihood skills which included farming, livestock raising, buying and selling, carpentry, machine technician, house painting, beauty culture, mechanics. According to them, they would welcome some training in dressmaking and tailoring, vocational training and handicraft, all of which would require literacy skills which a few residents said they already have.

Islam as a Way of Life and Community Knowledge

The parameters of community knowledge in Taka are defined by Islam which among Moslems is construed not only as a religion but also as a way of life. In the Philippine context, Islamic beliefs and practices are proverbial boundary-maintaining devices between pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, on one hand, some of which are similar to those mentioned earlier in the other communities (e.g., environmental spirits harking back to animistic origins of belief) and, on the other, practices and beliefs perceived as Christian. Regarding the latter, an additional complication is with respect to literate knowledge which is purveyed both by the school system (perceived to be heavily influenced by Westernized and Christian beliefs) and carried out in English and Filipino, and the *madaris* (Islamic community Schools) in which instruction on the Qur'an is provided in Arabic.

In this context, the language situation may be described as follows: Maranao (the local language) is spoken widely but it is not written because of the objection to the Romanized script explained earlier; the dominant regional language in the South is Cebuano; the

Qur'an is read or "memorized" in Arabic but little writing is being done in it especially by the marginal groups; English and Filipino are both read and written but in a very limited way. The preponderance of available reading materials is in English and Filipino, and in a lesser way, Cebuano. Everybody is required to read the Qur'an and say the prayers in Arabic.

In Islamic practice, the principal source of knowledge is the Qur'an and the Hadith; babies are born Moslem, and food is classified according to *halal* (lawful) or *haram* (forbidden).

The prohibition against pre-Islamic rituals and practices is well known to respondents and in fact they constantly mention it, even as they report rituals and practices of pre-Islamic origin.

It is clear, however, that from the data both Islamic precepts and pre-Islamic practices exist as part of community knowledge. This is best exemplified in the categories of wise men recognized by the community (Madale, 1993):

> 1) *Alim/Ulama*, Imam, learned men considered experts on Islam and the Al Qur'an, and the *Hadith*, or tradition of the Prophet; 2) experts on indigenous knowledge called *maongangen* literally, learned, intelligent, keeper of culture, specifically the: *pananalsila/pananaritib*, knowledgeable on genealogy, descent lines, lineage, as well as on local laws called *taritib* which maintain social order and *patetaro sa lalaq*, eloquent public speaker or steeped in the art of public speaking; 3) *pembarakat*, those with magical/mystical powers associated with the early missionaries in Islam called *Sufis*; 4) *pendarepa-an*, mediums who can communicate with the benevolent guardian spirits, who are consulted for their wisdom, who can foresee the future and warn people (fortune tellers or *paririmar*); and 5) *pelokelokesen*, elders who are respected and those who have held traditional titles in the past. They possess the respect and wisdom to settle disputes in the community. Their words and judgement are final because they are considered the law. To go against them means going against the community and the laws of the ancestors.

The second and fourth categories are pre-Islamic. The researcher's account (Madale, 1993) clearly shows the intermingling of these two categories of knowledge:

The culture of the people in the area can be classified into: pre-Islamic, Islamic and "modern". The best epic singers, *kulintang* (a musical instrument) players, and *bayok* (love song) singers, all come from this area and the nearby communities like Luma Bayabao, Romayas, and Mulondo. The traditional poets and other artists also come from this area.

The Maranao *Lumad* (pre-Islamic ancestors) believed in spirits. The spirits are classified into benevolent spirits, considered guardian spirits, and the malevolent spirits who make people sick or cause them to die.

The benevolent spirits, called *inikadowa*, are those who live within the immediate environment. They inhabit the lake, river, spring, *balete* trees and other "sacred places". It is in these places where they are appeased via periodic rituals.

The belief is that when people die they join the spirit world. The spirit lingers somewhere between the earth and heaven during the vigil period up to the 100th day. After the 100th day, the spirit joins the others and "visits" the living during the *arowak* day (day of the spirits). During this day (three days before breaking the fast in Ramadhan), the living prepares food and with the help of the *Imam*, the spirits are invited to partake of the food offered in the house for them.

Heaven and earth, including the human body, are believed to be divided into seven tiers/layers. Thus, they speak of the *pito pangkat a langit* (seven layers of the sky/heaven), *pito lapis a lawas* (seven layers of the human body) as well as seven elements that constitute the human body.

Each layer of the sky is believed to be inhabited by a guardian angel with distinct colours and characteristics. Allah, the Almighty, occupies the highest pedestal beyond the seventh layer of heaven.

In the story *Izra Wal Miraj*, the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad to heaven on the half-man, half-horse *burak* is documented. He was shown the seven layers of heaven before he was shown the curtains of heaven and hell. As a result of the Night Journey, the number of prayers daily was reduced from fifty times to five times daily.

The *pendarepa-an* (medium) and *pamomolong* (medicine man) are indispensable to the community. Aside from being a medium between the spirits and the living, the former can foresee and warn the people of crisis that may occur in the community. Once the crisis is related, the individuals concerned, with the help of the medium, appease the spirits so that the crisis will not take place. When the "water spouts" (tornado) appear in the lake, the Maranaos burn incense to appeal to the benevolent spirits that they may be spared from disaster.

The *pamomolong* (medicine man) uses both herbal medicine and oral recitations including Arabic formulas to cure the sick. Some Arabic inscriptions are written on pieces of paper and placed in a bottle to warn people not steal fruits, or the inscription is immersed in a bottle of water to cure a simple stomach ache. They are also hung at the front door to drive away evil spirits that may enter the house.

The *panday* (local midwife) takes care of the pregnant women for safe delivery. They also perform some rituals for mothers during their pregnancy to drive away the evil spirits that may intervene in the pregnancy of the mother. There are also several practices observed and taboos strictly observed during the pregnancy period.

The farmers and fishermen observe the position of the stars, and listen to the sounds of the animals and other creatures to be able to forecast the weather. The rays of the sun are observed to tell whether good weather is expected or not. One sign of the approach of rainy days is the croaking of frogs. On the other hand, the continuous sound of the crickets is a sign of the dry season.

Before a farmer clears the rice-fields, he performs a ritual called *kashawing*, a rice ritual done to ask the spirits of the rice fields and the lake for a bountiful harvest. At harvest time the first harvest is offered to the spirits to thank them for the bountiful harvest.

The fisherman's knowledge of the stars will tell him whether or not it is good to sail in the lake to catch fish. Some of these practices, however, are discouraged by the *ulema* who consider them un-Islamic.

Moreover, with the strong Islamic resurgence, these practices are forbidden. It is "unthinkable" for them to do these rituals because it is just like saying there is another supreme being aside from Allah.

In the public schools, meanwhile, there is ambivalence about the literate knowledge encoded in English or Filipino. On one hand, both are perceived as the language of the Christian majority; on the other, these languages, especially English are perceived to be good passports to find a job, to participate in politics and to work abroad.

Thus in the Moslem community of Taka, the relation between traditional beliefs and literate knowledge, exacerbated by the language situation as described, is characterized by multiple discontinuities in which literate practice in all the available languages suffers.

Marginalized Community Knowledge and Literate Practice Among the Christian Majority

Among the marginal, rural lowland Christian communities, there is a seeming lack of conflict in the adoption of modern modes of life, primarily because the transition has been taking place over a much longer period, from Spanish colonial times to the present. But a closer analysis suggests that this transition is laboured and fraught with contradictions. On one hand, there is a marked adherence to urbanized values and institutions; on the other, there are beliefs and practices harking back to the oral tradition. In a situation where the small elite groups with their Westernized practices, language and world views are dominant in all aspects of life, their kind of knowledge is privileged over the community knowledge whether in the oral or literate traditions. Thus, the knowledge of marginal groups of the Christian majority is also marginalized; even as their own traditional knowledge finds little or no integration with their literate knowledge.

In the four rural Christian communities, traditional knowledge and literate knowledge which are of relatively equivalent "size" are two different but co-existing knowledge systems. While the traditional knowledge of Kala, for example, is relatively integrated, and Islam remains the unifying principle of community knowledge in Taka, traditional knowledge in these communities seems diffused and fractured. Even the experts are of two types. Those for traditional knowledge include herbalists, *hilots* (local midwives), faith healers, successful farmers; those for literate knowledge are doctors, legal experts, local officials, the parish priest.

Traditional knowledge in these four communities is generally of four types: 1) practical advice based on experience and received knowledge, 2) beliefs and rituals from a pre-colonial tradition some of which are not really adhered to and/or only occasionally practised, 3) wise sayings, rules and mottos of the type usually given in school or in health brochures, and 4) folk Christian practices. There appears to be no integrating principle running through all this knowledge.

Practical advice based on experience and received knowledge is most often associated with health, childbearing, economic activities and weather (e.g. in selecting seeds of corn for planting, remove the grains at the tips of the cob for a vigorous plant; bury a dead animal near a fruit-bearing tree so that the fruits will become sweet and tender; when sparrows fly low in the afternoon, bad weather will follow; the infant's placenta should not be buried otherwise the rats will steal it). The maintenance of these practices is usually based on demonstrations of their efficacy which are then shared with others by word of mouth. Since these practices do not usually enter into the school discussions or are not tested in scientific research, the usefulness of this knowledge cannot be demonstrated formally and included in the literate tradition.

Beliefs and rituals from a pre-Colonial animistic tradition are prevalent in childbirth and treatment of illness (e.g., all windows should be closed when a mother is giving birth so that evil spirits cannot enter; people get sick because the *aswang* (witch) eats their liver). Sometimes, rituals are mixed with Christian signs and symbols as in Alaga (e.g., when stars form a Cross, there will be war or killing; before serving the cooked rice, make a sign of the Cross over it).

Respondents gave various answers to the questions on belief or practice: "You don't lose anything by doing this;" "We don't practise some of these anymore;" "I am afraid not to follow because it might be true;" "I was born into this knowledge."

Rules, mottos and wise sayings are also remembered and sometimes practised: "Those who do not love their own language are worse than decayed fish", from the national hero, Dr Jose Rizal; "Don't overcook vegetables so as not to lose the nutrients"; "Cleanliness is next to Godliness".

It is apparent from the data that with the younger respondents, beliefs and rituals lose currency but the practical advice remain; while the folk Christian beliefs and practices give way to Bible-based knowledge culled from Bible studies or prayer meetings. This, however, does not imply literate practice since Filipino Catholics are not usually Bible readers, although the Liturgy of the Sunday Mass is usually printed by more affluent parishes.

Literate knowledge in these communities is associated with new technology and new products (e.g., reading speedometer of motorcycle, use of thermometers and weighing scales, measurement of cubic metres for sand and gravel, reading of electric meters). In the relatively more affluent communities of Palihan and Magayon, it is also associated with the stronger presence of government line agencies (thus, health campaigns for vaccination and family planning, usually in Filipino, and more verbal political campaign materials or government notices) or with a more active civic life (thus, reports for members of co-operatives or other organizations, some reading materials on political issues from NGOs).

However, with the exception of community folk (as in Palihan) whose higher educational levels allow them to independently select and avail of new knowledge in the literate tradition, this knowledge is marginal to the main production activity of community life which is agriculture. Thus, only limited integration between literate and traditional knowledge occurs. To quote Bonifacio (1994) again:

> It is crucial to recognize that while technology is basic to agriculture, it is in reality a human activity with its own organization. In the Philippines, the research community has generally been biased against the farmers' traditional mode of production as reflected in the taken-for-granted premise that the technology scientists are developing must be superior to the farmers' practice. What is often not understood is that the displacement of the farmers' tradition undermines the substance of their lives."
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> ... The extension workers' lack of appreciation of the farmers' system of production has prevented them from feeding back the farmers' own innovations and technologies to researchers... A less recognized consequence is the marginalization of the farmers who could otherwise have been encouraged to participate in the process of developing and transferring technology.

Along the thesis of this chapter, the absence of this integration is due not only to the biases and present framework of agricultural extension but also to the fact that oral traditional knowledge does not enter the literate tradition, while the literate tradition of say, new agricultural technology, remains inaccessible to marginal farmers and other community folk.

Community Knowledge, Literate Practice and a Precarious Urban Poor Existence

The central reality of life in the urban poor communities is its precariousness and the daily struggle for survival under threat of demolition, loss of employment usually on daily wage basis, and general urban blight in the form of drug addiction, prostitution, overcrowding, absence of the most basic sanitation facilities. These conditions are heightened by juxtaposition with the affluence of the elite sector for whom urban poor folk sometimes work, and amenities of urban life seen at close quarters but often inaccessible to them.

Traditional knowledge in the urban poor research sites include some of the beliefs, practices and sayings from more rural communities earlier reported, but these are decidedly fewer because of their removal from the site of practice such as farming and fishing. Instead, respondents mention rules and sayings which are norms of good conduct, to be expected in communities living at very close quarters, and statements about poverty which alternate between toughness and cynicism on one hand, and resignation on the other.

Examples of the first type are: "Don't do unto others what you don't want done to you"; "One word is enough for a wise man". Other sayings show a certain acceptance of poverty: "While the blanket is small and narrow, learn to sleep in the fetal position"; or of cynicism: "A small hut with a human occupant is preferable to a mansion occupied by an owl"; "A thief is angry with another thief"; or of toughness and perseverance: "Without perseverance, you cannot eat meat stew".

Literate knowledge, on the other hand, is varied and extensive, based on mass media, government and school notices, political campaign materials, religious notices and materials, school knowledge, technology and processes related to their odd jobs and occupations. A run-down of examples given by a group of respondents from

Labasan age 40 and above will illustrate the range of these materials: news programs, newspapers in Filipino, pornographic magazines, rules of the neighbourhood association, leaflets from real estate agencies, Liturgy of the Sunday Mass, notice of deadline for payment of school tuition fees, Congress bill on the death penalty.

Reading, writing and computation as well as knowledge of new technology are involved in payment of debts, estimating diameter of keyholes for picking locks, making a list of daily expenses, estimating capital and gain, writing letter of application, doing simple bookkeeping, repairing household appliances, weighing scrap iron, reporting income and expenses of the association.

A small qualitative difference is noted between the Labasan and Martires data in that much more communal activities and literate knowledge are reported in Labasan. Otherwise, the apparently fragmented and diffused knowledge remains essentially similar.

While literate knowledge is extensive, these do not appear to be integrated, as are their odd jobs and shifting lives. The fragments of traditional knowledge are expected to dwindle further while literate knowledge will be replaced by others as new types of odd jobs become available with new technology. In this situation, both the literate knowledge and its practice will continue to lack focus and integration, remaining limited although diverse, marginal and precarious.

Possibilities of Integration Between Traditional and Literate Knowledge in Participant Communities

The data on community knowledge from Inipon and Corona were not gathered through the same instruments used in the other communities. The organizations preferred to submit materials they had made themselves and selected for submission. Thus data come from these materials; in the case of Inipon, their radio programs and other community activities. In the case of Corona, these are the materials they have developed for their community newsletter and other advocacy and mobilization activities. These must be understood as limitations to the present analysis.

In this analysis, the focus will be on the process by which two communities using the modality of participative democracy are trying to integrate traditional and literate knowledge for social projects relevant to their lives. In Inipon, this process is facilitated by a radio station owned by a progressive Catholic diocese. In Corona, the peoples' organization itself educates its members.

Inipon

Data for Inipon include a description of the various ways by which people's participation and feedback are elicited in the process of integration, as well as the weekly program schedule of the radio station and various letters to local officials on specific issues, signed by representatives of people's organizations of which there are eleven in the area (e.g., women, fisherfolk, youth, workers). These organizations are federated into a People's Congress.

The program schedule shows six types of broadcasts all done in Filipino: 1) news and information (on farm technology, weather forecasts, sports, legal matters, commodity prices, home tips, local and foreign news); 2) commentaries, discussions and people's feedbacks on news and issues, radio forums and calls for mobilization; 3) cultural-historical programs (Philippine history, music, riddles and stories for children, radio drama on a specific theme or focus performed by the local people, talent shows featuring poems and songs composed by local people; 4) post office-on-the-air (to announce letters, love notes and essays, requested songs for and by individuals; 5) religious programs (Bible reading and discussion, prayers, Mass on the air); and 6) radio school-on-the-air (described in chapter III).

Aside from the decidedly local community orientation of most of the programs and their attempt to cater to all ages and sectors, several observations can be made about the nature of the programming. First is the use of Filipino in all programs which in Philippine radio broadcasting is unusual. All programs are therefore accessible to everyone in the community. Second, the popularity of letters, notes, music, local dramas, riddles, and talent shows by local people themselves is recognized and encouraged. Third, forums on the air and local feedback reveal not only people's views, values and beliefs but are also mechanisms for developing consensus, correcting misinformation or misconceptions. Fourth, information related to the improvement of economic and home activities, prices and legal matters recognize that most people have no access to newspapers and other printed sources of information, and these are therefore provided on the air.

In this context, the possibilities of integrating traditional and literate knowledge could be at several levels. First, by airing all programs in Filipino, traditional and literate knowledge achieve equal status and become available for comment, comparison, criticism and closer analysis by everyone, including those not literate in either or both languages. Power and prestige relations are thus altered: between literates and non-literates; between those articulate in Filipino and those articulate in English; between Filipino and English which is viewed as more prestigious; between the statuses of traditional and literate knowledge.

Second, by encouraging literate practice (e.g., through letters on the air, written feedback from listening groups participating in the school-on-the-air program, writing of poems, dramas, riddles, folk songs, etc.), traditional knowledge has the possibility of entering the written tradition, and therefore into history, scepticism and the intellectual tradition (Goody and Watt, 1977). At the same time, when people write their hitherto oral knowledge, the possibility of "holding on" to their own knowledge becomes greater, to use, modify, transmit, expand or even discard as they see fit.

One form of integration of traditional and literate knowledge appears to be achieved in a letter (in Filipino) sent to the provincial governor by the People's Congress, asking him to take action, in which they are willing to participate, on several issues affecting their economic and related activities: illegal logging causing floods and other ecological destruction, and dynamite fishing. In this letter, various pertinent local ordinances and Constitutional provisions are cited (perhaps earlier discussed over the radio), as well as related statistical and other information, all these obviously part of literate knowledge. But in this same letter, information coming from traditional community knowledge and reported by the people themselves are also included: where the fish lay their eggs, what the fish eat (which are being destroyed by continuous erosion and flooding), kinds and number of trees brought down by the floods in the area.

Through literate practice, the two types of knowledge acquire equal status and relevance, both reinforcing the arguments advanced by the letter-writers for their social project which is to put a stop to illegal logging and dynamite fishing.

Corona

Data from Corona that were used for this analysis may be sequenced by level of complexity of content and presentation as follows: 1) photographs and explanations of symbolic compositions of fisherfolk using available materials (e.g., leaves, stones, sticks) done at a workshop, 2) leaflets announcing calls for mass mobilization and participation, 3) the script for a slide presentation on Laguna Lake, 4) several issues of their community newsletter, 5) sample guides for running seminars on various topics, and 6) a primer (with slides) on the fishing industry of the Philippines. All the materials are in Filipino.

It should be noted that while the researchers on site were provided the research instrument for gathering community knowledge, the organization preferred to submit copies of their own materials, as produced by themselves, in lieu of answering the research instrument. The meanings of this decision will be taken up in the synthesis of this chapter. Another important point is that, except for the poems and stories, the written materials are without authors, not only to perhaps protect those who wrote the text but also as a sign of the collective and evolved nature of the written product, just as all material in the oral tradition go without authors.

The symbolic compositions are meant to portray events, situations, emotions or abstract concepts (e.g., poverty, environmental degradation, etc.) whose meanings are then orally explained by the individuals and more often, by the groups who made them. Here, the participation of even non-literate individuals is possible, for the purpose of objectifying experience and meanings. This symbol-formation using everyday materials is also apparent in other folk metaphors adopted by the organization:

> *Lawa* (lake) stands for *buhay* (life). For the people, the lake is the source of their livelihood and without it, they cannot survive, hence the sayings: *Kapag pinatay ang lawa, patay na rin kami* (If the lake dies, then so will we.) and *Hindi puedeng alisin sa tubig ang mga tao* (The people cannot survive outside of the water).
>
> *Araw* (sun) represents *pag-asa* (hope) and *lakas* (energy).

Lambat (net) symbolizes *tiyaga* (patience) and also *paghahayuma* (community organizing).

Sagwan (oar/paddle) stands for *sulong* (to move forward).

Katig (outrigger) represents *kabalikat* (network).

Propeller means *batayang kalagayan*, *batayang paniniwala*, *batayang pagkilos* (situational guide, basic principles, guidelines).

Alon (wave) symbolizes *problema* (problems).

Leaflets of various kinds are generally accompanied by drawings with little or extensive verbal material. The script for a relatively long slide presentation on the issue of Laguna Lake has five parts: 1) the relatively better life of the community before the degradation of the lake which is not a romanticized presentation because it includes as well the problems that fisherfolk had before (e.g., boats too small, poor marketing system because of bad roads); 2) a history of how the lake became polluted because of the establishment of factories around it, and how the small fishermen were crowded out of the lake by big-time fish-pen operators; 3) the importance of the lake as a link to nearby provinces, as well as the general importance to the Philippines of its rivers, lakes, seas and other bodies of water; 4) the effects of the lake degradation on local fisherfolk; and 5) the general problems of the fishing industry in the Philippines.

The community newsletter produced through a participative process (described in chapter III) contains more information on these issues and about the organizational activities, some local action research results, riddles and children's works as well as stories, sayings and local poems.

The sample guides for seminars (called seminar screens) are presented in a simple grid format showing the seminar objectives, process, and outcomes. In general, participation is elicited in setting objectives (through an "expectation check"), in the activities during the seminar, in the evaluation of the process, and in the planning of further work or activities after the seminar.

The slide-primer on the fishing industry of the Philippines has very extensive verbal material, a high information load and relatively fewer visuals.

Several general observations could be made on the nature of these materials in terms of the questions we posed in this chapter. First, the attempt to integrate traditional and literate knowledge is very apparent. Traditional knowledge is found in the choice of symbols, folk metaphors, local information, riddles/sayings, locally produced poems and stories; literate knowledge is found in the technical and historical information and legal matters. Traditional knowledge is translated to written form first through drawings and illustrations, then through folk metaphors and short riddles, then through longer writing as in poems and stories.

The non-literate organization members have an opportunity to be gradually introduced to literate practice through this sequential presentation, aided by slides and oral narration in the more complex presentations. This is the context in which it is reported that "even limited formal education among some members seems never to have dramatically hindered any undertaking of the organization. In fact, leaders do not consider illiteracy or low educational attainment as a problem. Becoming literate perhaps only happened to be a requirement in order to get things done."

Second, the extensive use of folk metaphors and word combinations to form new words with new meanings is noted. Some examples of word combinations are: *sama-aralan* (literally, together-study is the word used for group study); *tala-kaalaman* (literally, note-knowledge, is the word used for notebook); *tawid-buhay* (literally to cross-life, is the word used for subsistence activities); *kita-ralin* (literally, see-study, is the word used for illustrated notes or presentations). These forms of expression are generally to be found in oral Tagalog (which is the principal base of the Filipino language and the home language of Corona community folk) in which the fisherfolks' traditional knowledge is encoded.

In general, the usual method of translation to English or even to "modern" Filipino to refer to "modern" objects and concepts is to use the English term (e.g., notebook for English or *notbuk* in the respelling in Filipino), but one consequence is the loss of the meaning of what the object is for (e.g., a notebook is for written notes of knowledge). By coining the new word, *tala-kaalaman*, the exact and essential meaning of notebook is captured. But this is not all. The term for notebook in strict Tagalog translation is *tala-aralan*. If one analyses this term further, it suggests "notes for study" or "notes that one records from a source," perhaps from an expert or a teacher; in short, *tala-aralan* signifies notes of received knowledge. Instead, the new term used is *tala-kaalaman* (notes on knowledge) which would have a more general meaning than just received knowledge. Aside from this knowledge, it could include, for example, a record of one's own insights, one's own reflections and ideas; in short, this term does not privilege only received knowledge but one's own knowledge as well.

For the relatively modern concept of subsistence, the usual method of translation would be again to use the English term (usually written in italics) or the Filipino re-spelling (*subsistens*), both of which do not convey the meaning of the concept to those not familiar with the definition of the term subsistence, in the first place. The new word *tawid-buhay* conveys the exact and essential meaning of the concept, while preserving the metaphor, "a bridge to maintain life" which is embedded in the concept of subsistence. This metaphor is not new to Tagalog speakers because there is already a similar and generally used word, *pantawid-gutom* (literally, cross-hunger, to refer to small amounts of food to take the place of a larger or regular meal where this is not available).

It will be recalled that this is in the same metaphorical mode used by the Sama of Boheh Umos to refer to the Western concept *ad infinitum* by comparing it to innumerable locks of hair intertwined, or *sagamun sagindai.*

In fact, what seems to be operating in these examples is a kind of double "translation" in which the characteristics of the oral language are preserved in its written form by not losing the metaphorical mode of oral expression, and by combining words into new ones to express the exact and precise meaning of the new concept. In these few examples (which need to be subjected to more rigorous semantic analysis) we can see a more subtle form of integrating traditional and literate knowledge in the process of transforming traditional and literate knowledge into the written mode.

A third general observation is the explicitly political nature of the materials whose objectives of conscienticizing, informing, educating, calling to mass action are geared towards the principal social projects of making the lake their own again and finding common cause with other fisherfolk in the country to address the problems of the fishing industry in the Philippines.

A fourth general observation is that the whole set of materials (in sequence) has a pedagogical objective to raise the levels of literacy skills and information, to expand the world views of the membership through history and geography (e.g., the information that Laguna Lake links provinces perhaps not even visited by some members; Philippine seas, rivers and lakes are important to every Filipino especially fisherfolk), to develop a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the organization's social projects without losing their roots in the personal lives and future of the members themselves.

Synthesis

The historical sketch provides the necessary background and context for the understanding of how traditional and literate knowledge of Filipinos became separate streams in the process of colonization, and how the social elements of the Romanization of the script, new languages introduced, property relations, religion, language policy on the medium of instruction in formal schools, and relative social statuses of the different languages have contributed to this separation. The present situation of illiteracy in the country has been reduced in general terms, without real analysis of its complexity, into the popular equation: literacy is related to poverty, with illiteracy construed variously either as an effect or a cause of poverty.

This unfortunate, vague and simplistic relation which many marginalized Filipinos have also accepted is expressed in the local word, *mangmang* (ignorant, without knowledge), to refer to those who have not had the benefit of a formal education where literate knowledge in the written mode is transmitted. This formulation is also the basis of many literacy programs and mass campaigns whose principal and implicit assumption is thus "to give knowledge" to those who don't have it because they are not literate.

In the presentation and analysis of community knowledge across the Philippine marginal community types, from the oral to the participant communities, we have traced the route of how community knowledge, once encoded only in the oral mode (as in Boheh Umos), became separated through time into two streams of knowledge, the traditional and the literate.

Stated in another way, this analysis, using the example of Boheh Umos as some form of contemporary baseline, is an attempt to analyse the essentially diachronic process of the passage of marginal communities from an oral to a literate tradition, using a synchronic mode of analysis. The consequences of the separation of these two streams of knowledge to people's literate practice in their community activities will be delineated more fully in the next chapter.

Relation Between Traditional and Literate Knowledge

In the example of Corona we see the attempts of the people's organization to integrate these two separate streams, as a crucial element in their education towards the realization of their social projects. In the two communities of Boheh Umos and Corona at both ends of our typology of communities, we are able to understand the relation between community knowledge (characterized by wholeness and integration) as a cultural element, and a form of social organization characterized by equity, communalism, people's participation in community life. In the examples of the communities in between these two types, we are also able to understand how the two streams became separated because of inequity, individualism and people's marginal participation in decisions governing community life. Corona's example shows us how people themselves are attempting to make their knowledge whole again so that they can use it for their own purposes. What about the communities in between these two types?

Kala generally holds on to its traditional knowledge especially of rice terracing agriculture in the oral mode, whose survival is relatively well ensured because it is part of a whole socio-cultural system where social organization, rituals, beliefs and rules on property relations form a structure of support, even as the literate knowledge is limited and confined to elements peripheral to its agricultural system (except in the case of court settlements for the *payew*).

In the absence of such support, given the shifting swidden agricultural mode in Alaga, traditional knowledge while relatively extensive is concentrated on cultural forms (epics, songs, ballads) and animistic beliefs related to daily activities, even as literate knowledge becomes relatively larger than that of Kala, but concentrated on computations important to their marginal participation in a cash economy. Among those in the younger age groups, doubts about traditional knowledge have been expressed, but there is little or no literate knowledge to replace it; only some half-remembered, discrete and even trivial literate knowledge such as poems in English (e.g., *Three Billy Goats, Jack and Jill*). Development projects in the area have not significantly impacted on literate knowledge because people have little or no participation in planning, implementing, and evaluating these projects.

Taka is an example unto itself because of its special situation involving pre-Islamic, Islamic and Western literate knowledge under conditions of being a minority in a predominantly Christian country, and having two sets of formal education systems with different traditions (Western and Islamic). However, Islamic practice which is not only confined to religious matters but is construed as a way of life provides a focus for meanings and integration as well as mechanisms for boundary maintenance.

In the four Christian lowland rural communities, the two streams of traditional and literate knowledge become distinct and separate bodies of knowledge. In a situation where the small elite groups, heavily Westernized in their practices, preferred languages and world views are dominant in all aspects of life, the elite kind of knowledge is privileged over community knowledge, whether in the oral or literate tradition. The consequence is the marginalization of the knowledge of the marginal communities, and the non-integration of their own traditional and literate knowledge into relatively fractured and diffuse form. Exogenous development projects which are quite numerous in these areas consistently ignore the community folks' traditional knowledge, wishing to change it with new or modern knowledge which then becomes difficult to integrate into the existing system, as pointed out by Bonifacio (1994) earlier, resulting in the failure of the development project and the continued inaccessibility of new knowledge and technology to marginal community folk.

In the urban poor communities, the much more precarious material conditions exacerbate the separation of the two forms of knowledge, with the effect of definitely reducing and further fracturing traditional knowledge, and expanding literate knowledge which however remains diffuse, unintegrated, shifting and without focus, and based only on the demands of the succession of odd jobs that become available to them.

Passage from an Oral to a Literate Tradition

Without pretending to use a quantitative basis which is not available in this study, we may attempt to characterize the passage of a community from an oral to a literate tradition by rating their capacity to objectify (i.e., report) their traditional and literate knowledge in order that it can be rendered in written form. Stated differently and following Goody and Watt (1977), we are trying to represent the capacity of community folk themselves to verbalize the knowledge which is embedded in their practice (e.g. "What we know is how we live," say the Sama of Boheh Umos). Knowledge in the oral tradition has an immediacy and a particularizing context in the form of persons involved in the practice, and the time and place in which it is done. Along this same point, we recall the report from Kala where the Ifugao, "in contrast with the technical and formal way of dating rice terracing activities, integrate economic necessities, physical givens reinforced by mythology as explanations for the origin of extensive terracing activities. Time is reckoned from a generational history as basis for dating the terraces."

The process of objectification involving writing according to Levy-Bruhl (in Goody and Watt, 1977), "establishes a different kind of relationship between the word and its referent, a relationship that is more general and more abstract, and less connected with particularities of person, place and time, than obtains in oral communication."

We can apply this distinction to our qualitative data which involve the oral reporting of community knowledge by the people themselves, in which it is noted that, in general, where respondents have had more exposure to the literate tradition, their capacity to abstract or objectify their traditional knowledge increases (therefore the larger "size" of their reported knowledge), whether or not they themselves know how to report this in writing. In the process, however, this traditional knowledge from their practice appears to become progressively fragmented and diffused, the farther respondents are from the site of practice, as in the case of the knowledge of the urban poor with respect, for example, to farming and fishing.

While this process is happening, their literate knowledge available in written form but predominantly in an inadequately understood foreign language using alien content cannot be integrated into their traditional knowledge and does not expand fast enough to replace the traditional knowledge that increasingly loses its status or credibility (as shown in instances of belief without practice, practice without belief, or attempts to distance oneself from traditional beliefs).

The apparent result of this complex situation (even to us at present), is the lack of integration and focus in both the traditional and literate knowledge, as shown in the examples from the marginal Christian rural communities and, in more extreme form, in the urban poor communities.

Integrating Traditional and Literate Knowledge Towards a Social Project

The examples of Inipon and particularly of Corona provide us a contrary instance of a people's organization attempting to enter the literate tradition without losing their traditional knowledge, firmly holding their knowledge in their own hands for their own uses and purposes, and for explicitly common social projects: to build a community in Inipon; to take control of their lake again in Corona and to find common cause with other small fisherfolk in the country. An extensive analysis of how they are attempting to do this has been given earlier.

In general, six main modes of integration have been identified: 1) the use of their own language (Filipino), 2) consistently encouraging literate practice, 3) combining both traditional and literate knowledge in new forms, 4) coining new word-combinations to express new concepts, 5) attempting to incorporate the characteristics of their oral expression into the written mode, and 6) seeing to it that even the mode of producing their own text is under their control by using only whatever technology is available to them.

The integrating principles which run through all these modes are: 1) that everybody participates in the whole process, even as the various materials follow a pedagogical sequence which enables non-literates to initially participate but in which they are encouraged to learn to read and write; 2) thus, passage into a literate tradition will include everybody; and 3) all these activities are for the explicit purpose of realizing their social projects.

If we were to visually present this passage of the communities from an oral to a literate tradition (given all the limitations of our data), we may rate the capacity of the respondents in the community types to verbalize their knowledge in this manner, on a scale of 0 to 10 (Table 5). We are not including the Moslem community, Taka, for reasons already given.

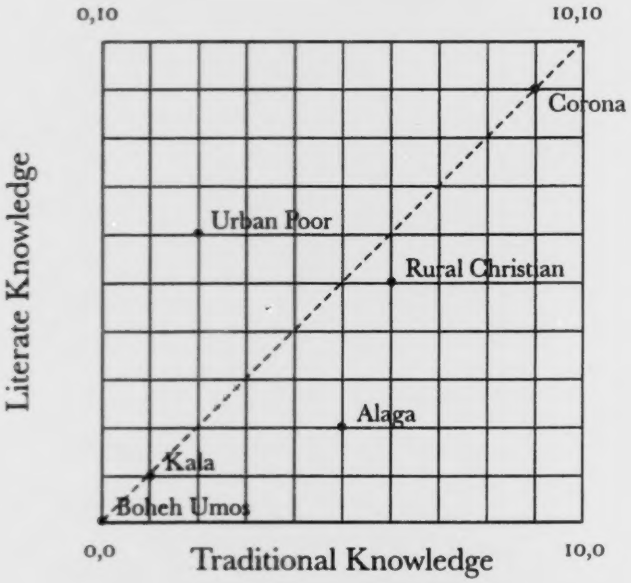
Table 5: Relative Capacity of Respondents to Verbalize Their Traditional and Literate Knowledge

Community Type	Traditional Knowledge	Literate Knowledge
Traditional	0	0
Transitional (Kala)	1	1
(Alaga)	5	2
Christian	6	5
Urban Poor	2	6
Developmental	9	9

We tried to visually present the ratings from Table 5 on the square grid below.

The broken lines suggest the hypothetical trajectory of the passage from an oral to a combined oral and literate tradition under ideal conditions where the only new element that is introduced is the invention of a script that became accessible to everyone.

Figure 3: Graphic Presentation of the Ratings from Table 5



In a situation like that obtaining in marginal Philippine communities, as described earlier, the problems embedded in the objective literacy situation may have produced the deviations from this hypothetical trajectory. Thus, the literacy situation in the four community types between the two communities, Boheh Umos and Corona, are deviations from this trajectory. Kala is on track or least deviant; the lowland Christian rural communities are relatively closer to the trajectory if some organizing principle could be found to integrate their literate and traditional knowledge, as what Corona and Inipon are doing; Alaga and the urban poor communities have the largest deviations from this trajectory but they are in opposite directions. In a manner of speaking, these two community types have at least one characteristic in common — the shifting and precarious nature of their economic life.

If the above constructions are correct, the most relevant further studies for both academic and policy purposes related to literacy would be in the cases of Kala (least deviant), and the cases of Alaga and urban poor communities (most deviant but in opposite directions); as well as a more rigorous study across communities of the three factors just enumerated.

In this rough and very preliminary attempt, we advance the thesis that three interrelated elements in a community may be crucial to the understanding of the passage of a community from an oral to an integrated oral and literate tradition under conditions similar to those obtaining in the Philippines: 1) capacity of individuals to abstract or objectify their knowledge from their practice (whether in oral or written form), 2) sustained attempts to integrate traditional and literate knowledge and render these in written form, 3) presence of a common social project which serves as focus of and integrating element in the whole process.

These factors are interrelated and must be understood to operate best under conditions where the community folk themselves decide, in an organized way, to enter the mainstream of literate society by transforming themselves into literate individuals in order to have the means to also transform the conditions in the mainstream that have contributed to their own marginalization, including illiteracy.

Questioning Our Own Methods of Generating knowledge

One of the conditions of this transformation, as we noted initially to our chagrin, is the power relation between the researcher and the human objects of his/her study. Towards the objective of generating new knowledge, we social researchers assume the whole of human life as the proper objects of our study, using our own methods to generate the data, for our own modes of analysis and interpretation. The audience for this analysis would include other academics, policy makers and students in higher education.

Yet, all practising social scientists know that it is infinitely easier to study marginal individuals and communities than it is to study more affluent people, establishments and corporations. For these latter groups, a negotiation has to be made with more precise parameters mutually established (e.g., "Only these kinds of records but not others, especially financial statements"). We accept this as a matter of practice but we are surprised to find community folk imposing these same conditions on our research.

If now we take Corona as our other baseline, we begin to understand one way by which they propose to transform the conditions in the mainstream, by transforming the power relations between the researchers and their people's organization: we needed to ask permission from the organization to interview their members; they chose not to answer some of our interview formats preferring instead to present their own materials as basis for analysis; they should receive a copy of our site report. Our concern for comparability of our data had to take second place to these conditions, while the knowledge that we had to submit a copy of our report to them exercised a subtle influence on the way we analysed and interpreted their materials and responses, at the very least in an attempt to be as faithful as possible to the data.

For the marginal communities in the middle of our typology, no such conditions were set but who can tell how much of their knowledge they shared with us and which ones they decided to keep to themselves?

In Kala, Taka and particularly in Boheh Umos, the ethnographers' accounts had to suffice although perhaps the fact that the researchers were themselves culture-bearers mitigated the possibility of misinterpretation. But what opportunity do unlettered folk have to check our interpretation of their lives?

On the other hand, if all the communities were like Corona, what changes would have been needed in our design and methodology?

We raise some of these issues in this chapter on knowledge and consider the possibilities in the re-thinking of our own research practices as we imagine how the entry of previously unlettered folk, with their own agendas, from an oral into the literate tradition will in fact have important consequences on the way in which we construct the knowledge that will contribute to the building of that same tradition.

CHAPTER V

The Practice, Meanings and Definitions of Functional Literacy in the Context of Community Activities

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, WE HAVE shown some aspects of the nature of knowledge systems across community types, and how in the process of social change under colonial conditions, knowledge from the oral tradition came in contact with knowledge from a literate tradition viewed as "superior", because of the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. The consequences to these two knowledge systems have likewise been analysed, in the passage of marginal communities from the oral to the literate tradition.

Along the point of colonizer-colonized relations and their consequences to the development of community knowledge, we must note that those communities that held on the longest to their own traditional knowledge, as it were, are those who mounted the longest resistance to colonial rule: Kala in the Cordilleras; Taka in Moslem Mindanao; Boheh Umos, by isolation. We note further that Corona and Inipon, through their social projects are, in a manner of speaking, asserting their sovereignty to their own knowledge, choosing from both traditional and literate (colonial) knowledge what they find necessary and useful for their own purposes.

Having considered this dimension, we now turn to specific community activities and technology, the two other elements included in the conceptualization of practice. The focus of the analysis in this section is on three general types of community activities: livelihood-economic, socio-cultural and political civic; as well as on how literate and oral practice and their meanings enter into these activities. In the strict sense, this is how functional literacy is usually defined. From this analysis, it will then be possible to propose a methodology for the systematic definition of functional literacy for each type of community activities, as a basis for designing community-based literacy programs.

We ask the question: What factors help determine the nature of literate and oral practice in the sets of activities, given the data from the various communities?

Technology, Livelihood-Economic Activities and Literate Practice

Following Zvorikine (1963), we understand technology to be "the instruments and means of labour developing in a system of production." This definition of technology is used for present purposes for three main reasons: 1) it applies to technical means developed and transmitted in either oral or literate contexts without privileging one or the other; 2) it establishes the close relation between technology and economic activity; 3) it recognizes the open-ended nature of technological development including the meaning, adaptation or further development of traditional and new technology.

In the Philippine context, these distinctions are important because, as we have shown earlier, knowledge and therefore also technology from both the oral and literate traditions co-exist, without necessarily becoming integrated. We may therefore refer to two types of technology as we did with community knowledge: 1) traditional technology, developed and transmitted in the oral tradition; and 2) literate technology, regardless of the tradition in which it was developed but, and this is the crucial element, transmitted in the literate tradition.

In this context, three factors underlying the relation between livelihood-economic activities, technology and literacy practice may be identified from the data: 1) the interrelations among technology, knowledge and memory; 2) the nature of the social organization and relations of production; and 3) adaptations, modifications on, and attempts to integrate traditional and literate technology. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

Technology, Knowledge and Memory in Livelihood-Economic Activities

In locating literacy practice in livelihood-economic activities, it is necessary to consider the interrelations among technology, knowledge and memory.

Where the technology used has been developed and transmitted in the oral tradition, literacy practice is absent or not extensive and much depends on the knowledge, in particular, the traditional lore stored in memory that underlies the technical practice. Thus, in Boheh Umos, where the principal activity of fishing is carried out with traditional technology (e.g. a sailboat, a spear or harpoon, a mainline along which are attached baited hooks of different sizes, similar to that used in Lapu-Lapu), no literate practice is reported, except for example, in the computation of individual shares of profit from the fishing expedition which, in any case, is done by a third party, the Chinese *sukih* with his abacus. But much depends on the fishermen's traditional lore which is by no means simple: where the different kinds of fish are and when they come, understanding of the monsoon, the trade winds and the current, sailing by the stars, among others.

Among the Ifugao and other Cordillera tribes, rice-terracing practice involves the sophisticated integration of engineering, agricultural and irrigation technology in which actual construction and production activities, rituals, tools, the agricultural calendar and explanations are intertwined (Cariño, 1994). All of these have been transmitted through generations by oral tradition and are stored in memory. Among the women of Taka, the intricate designs of the cloth woven on the simple hand-loom are stored in memory and transmitted to the daughters who must sit at their mother's side to memorize the designs and learn how to weave them into the cloth.

In all these cases, one aid to memory (among other functions) is the wise man or woman, the arbiter of disputes on practice due to lapses in the memories of practitioners; thus the *botang mat'toa* among the Sama, the *babaylan* (shaman) or *parangkuton* of Alaga (wise man or woman, literally, the one who is asked) who can chant whole epics, the *manlapu* (elders) of the Ifugao tribe, are recognized by tradition as the keepers of the lore, in much the same way as literate people would consult books or encyclopaedias.

The unlettered Ita *hilot* (local midwife) from Loob, certified by the Department of Health (DOH) to practise her profession provided she keep a record of her deliveries, memorizes a large amount of necessary information until she is able to report these to the local DOH office or to her niece who is literate. This was a surprise to the researcher on site, but entirely understandable in a situation where, required to work in a literate context but without literate skills, the Ita *hilot* resorts to memory (an accustomed practice to one born into the oral tradition) in order to function in a literate society. This is in the same mode done by some of the Moslems of Taka who "read" the Qur'an but have actually memorized some parts of it.

Even such a complex activity as calling bets in a traditional cockfight (reported in all lowland communities in the sample) involving dozens of bets is done by the *kristo* (caller of bets) entirely by sign language and memory of the faces of the bettors, supported, as it were, by the strict honour system prevailing in cockfights. Even if the *kristo* is literate, this age-old traditional practice remains without recourse to writing.

Even with the acquisition of literate yet still simple technology (e.g. how to make fish-balls following a recipe in Lapu-Lapu, written instructions on rug making among the urban poor in Labasan or on machine weaving as in Kala), literate practice is not extensive because the instructions are soon memorized and there is no need to read or write any further. As reported in the Lapu-Lapu site report: "They write down the recipes and procedures in simplified form and when they have learned these by heart, they do away with reading and writing them."

However, when the simple literate technology requires continuous precision and accuracy, more extensive literate practice is reported. Thus, carpenters and dressmakers across communities report constant use of writing to record measurements, as well as knowledge of units of measure, and calculation, for example, of board foot and cubic metre. For those who are literate but without literate technology as in Alaga, (e.g. ruler, carpenter's tape measure), they resort to *dangaw-dangaw* (measuring with thumb and middle finger) or *dupa-dupa* (an arm's length) when doing carpentry work or other similar activity.

The requirement for accuracy and precision is, however, constrained by the general extent of literacy practice in the community itself. It is usually the case that when extensive reading and writing are not a usual practice in the community, literate technology that requires accuracy and precision such as the mixing and application of pesticides (*Magdalena and Magayon data*) is not usually done with recourse to close reading or copying of instructions, even if the person doing this is literate. The same thing is true for contraceptives (*Labasan data*). Thus, cases of pesticide poisoning and errors in the use of contraceptives are reported.

In contrast, in a community where literate practice is widespread, as suggested by the variety and availability of reading materials on site, the range of reading and writing activities expands, using literate technology. For example, literacy-numeracy skills reported for a backyard piggery fattening project cover all the related activities, from buying feed to actual feeding, to vaccination, fattening and marketing. Literate practice is not only widespread but specialized, ranging from writing lists of supplies, reading medicine labels and expiry dates, reading vaccination procedures, writing small advertisements to be posted along the road ("Piglets for Sale"), computing dosage and vaccines, estimating income and so on (*Palihan data*).

Social Organization, Relations of Production and Literate Practice

Relations among literate practice, social organization and relations of production are also indicated from our data involving literate practice in the market, in a predominantly cash economy, in single proprietorship, between landlords and sugar workers in a plantation economy, between owners and employees, and in co-operatives. The critical element in this particular analysis is the way in which these relations encourage or constrain literacy practice.

In the market, aside from oral computations using the "adding-on" method (reported in all sites), recording of debts and credits or making lists appears to be part of literate practice in commercial activities. In small *sari-sari* (variety) stores, for example, found everywhere in the country, lists of debtors and amounts are made by hand (but big department stores already use the more modern literate technology such as cash registers). No such lists are made for "one-shot" transactions in the market. But in the *sari-sari* stores, when a long-term relation between debtor and *suki* (creditor, recalling the same term used in Boheh Umos) is established because of credit, these lists are made to preserve a relation which is very important in a subsistence economy.

In a predominantly cash economy such as in urban poor communities, lists and records are kept for long-term relations (e.g. *pahulugan*, instalment payments). But only computations without lists are necessary for other "one-shot" activities, primarily gambling (e.g. "*nagpapa*-ending", gambling on the end number in lotteries or sweepstakes") (*Labasan and Martires data*).

In a single proprietorship with employees, everything else being equal (e.g. amount of capital, scope of operations, technology involved), one critical element in the extent and distribution of literate practice is the relation between employees and owner, as determined for example by the level of skills required of the employees, and the mode of payment. Consider these two records done in Magayon by the researcher on site (Hermosa, 1994):

At the Rice Mill

Name: Corazon Fulo Grains
Owner: Corazon Fulo
Address: Magayon, Sorsogon

No. of Workers: 5
Age: 30 and above
Gender: Male

Type of Work: Helper Operator
Loader/Unloader
Palay Drier

Activities:
1. Unloading/loading
2. Drying of palay
3. Weighing
4. Buying palay
5. Selling rice (wholesale/retail)

Literacy-Numeracy Skills Used (who does what):

Writing the number of kilos of palay/rice (owner)
the price of rice/palay (owner)

	the income/expenses (owner) the daily wages of the workers (owner) the total number of sacks or kilos of palay purchased (owner) the total number of sacks or kilos of palay milled daily (owner)
Reading	weighing scales (employee) electric voltage (employee) number of kilos sold (employee) number of customers (owner)
Counting	the number of customers (owner)
Computing	the number of sacks or kilos of rice and palay milled (owner) the number of sacks or kilos of palay purchased from farmers (owner) the total number of sacks or kilos of palay milled (owner) income/expenses (owner)
Decisions made	– buying of palay (owner) – drying of palay (owner/employee) – the price of wet or defective palay (owner) – the number of kilos of defective palay to be deducted from total (owner)

At the Beauty Parlour

Name: Basa's Beauty Parlour
Owner: Nida Basa
Address: Magayon, Sorsogon

Number of workers: 3
Age: 20–35
Sex: gay (2) and female (1)

Type of Work: Beautician

Activities:
1. Manicuring
2. Pedicuring

3. Hair cutting/trimming
4. Curling
5. Giving facials
6. Hair strengthening
7. Giving hot oil
8. Hair blowing
9. Hair dyeing
10. Make up/Hair do

Literacy-Numeracy Skills Used (who does what):

Reading	the labels of materials/medicines, magazines (employee)
Writing	records of incomes/expenses (owner, employee) the total number of customers (employee) the total amount of payment from customers (owner) computing the total amount of payment from customers (owner, employee) the total number of customers (owner) the amount of money for the owner and for the beauticians (owner) the income and expenses (owner)

Topics of conversation

- beauty tips
- latest hair-styles of celebrities
- gossip about people in town

Decisions made

- the brand of materials to be used (employee, owner)
- the amount of chemicals applied on hair (employee,owner)

Employees at the rice mill are hired, low-skilled workers usually paid daily or weekly; those in the beauty parlour are relatively skilled beauticians, paid monthly by agreed-upon percentage of net income. More literacy practice as well as decisions on the part of employees can be observed in the beauty parlour because of the nature of the relations between employer and employees.

Paradoxically, in a plantation type community (Magdalena), where literate technology (sugar production and sugar milling) has made large-scale operations possible, thus requiring changes in the relations of production (plantation owners and sugar workers), an exploitative situation could also lead to increased literate practice among the sugar workers especially where they have become aware of their situation. A comparative statistical analysis of the performance of respondents from six research sites on the numeracy test shows that the highest scores were obtained by sugar workers (*Magdalena data*).

One explanation for the numeracy skills of these workers or small farmers may be found in at least four kinds of relatively complex sharing arrangements obtaining in the area: 1) *tumbada* system where the payment for weeding the cane field depends on the area covered; 2) *kamada* system where the sugar-cane that has been cut is piled, and the payment depends on the number of piles and the number of sugar-cane pieces per pile; 3) *alili* system where the farmer sells his standing crop per ton, an arrangement which requires very sophisticated and close calculation by both buyer and farmer of the size and value of the standing crop, given that in sugar production, the value of the crop is calculated not only from the weight of the sugar cane but from its yield in terms of sugar (called the "pureza" of the cane). Thus, in this calculation, many factors must enter such as the type of cane and how much fertilizer went into the production; and 4) *karga tapas* where payment is based on the actual number of sugar-cane cut and loaded by the worker.

Indeed, a closer look at the data matrix of community activities (*Magdalena data*) as well as associated problems shows the predominance of computation (for debts, production sharing, tons of sugar-cane loaded etc.) and the concern to "compute fast and accurately" in order not to be fooled by *hacenderos*.

In co-operatives where relations of members within the organization have changed to a more participatory form, information needs to be disseminated to all members, and accountability of officers is recognized. Thus, the reporting has to be more extensive, accurate and specialized. Consider this report on site, also from Magayon (Hermosa, 1994):

At the Producers' Cooperative

Name: Magayon Calamansi (Citrus) Producers Development Cooperative, Inc. (MCPDCO)
Address: Magayon, Sorsogon
Type of Organization: Producers' Coop/Farmers

Number of Members: 45

Objectives:
1. To establish a uniform pricing of *calamansi* (citrus) especially during peak season
2. To develop the capability of the members through sharing of experience and needs
3. To build up capital resources for relending to members and non-members in the community

Programs:
1. Increase productivity
2. Linkaging with other co-op for marketing
3. Economic resource generation
4. Carabao (water buffalo) relay (rotation of carabaos for farm use)

Source of Reports:
- Manager
- Treasurer
- Bookkeeper
- Secretary
- Clerk
- Messenger

Historical Background:

The MCPDCO was first organized as an association of small *calamansi* (citrus) growers. In 1991, the association was converted into a co-operative and registered with the local co-operatives board. Upon registration, the Board of Directors and members underwent training and seminars sponsored by different agencies and NGOs engaged in co-operative development.

Through the initiative of the officers, MCPCDO was able to establish linkages with different agencies such as the Land

> Bank of the Philippines for relending to members. Their paid-up capital and interest income has enabled them to increase their credit capability.
>
> Aside from the members, other people in the community have been able to borrow from this Coop, such as small market vendors and even teachers.

Aside from the extensive reporting as suggested by the reports from various personnel, it will be noted that a program of membership education was instituted by the co-operative through relevant agencies when the form of the organization and therefore the social relations among the farmers was changed, from a loose association to a co-operative with its principles of member participation, accountability of the leaders and transparency of operations.

In fact, where the social organization encourages greater direct participation of its members in terms of a social project (as in a co-operative), the data show that the requirement for literate practice gives even oracy practice itself new meaning. Thus, respondents who are members of co-operatives or people's organizations report that in addition to learning how to write, they are now able to participate actively, give opinions more freely, even preside at meetings (*Magayon, Palihan, Inipon, and Corona data*).

The point being made here is not only that the acquisition of literacy skills enables people to participate more, but also that where the context of social practice has changed towards greater people involvement, both literacy and oracy gain added importance. For example, the new communication skills requiring both literate and oral practice learned by members of a co-operative or people's organization include: discussion, facilitation, synthesizing, public speaking, bargaining, negotiation (*Corona and Inipon data*). As the site reports state: "Even limited formal education among some members seems never to have dramatically hindered any undertaking of the organization. In fact, leaders do not consider illiteracy or low educational attainment as a problem nor have they taken any note of it at all. Becoming literate perhaps only happened to be a requirement to get things done."

Literate Practice in the Adaptation, Modification and Integration of Traditional and Literate Technology

Attempts to adapt, modify and integrate traditional and literate technology have been reported in the various communities. When this is done, literate practice is usually involved whether in rudimentary or complex form. Some examples are given below.

Where the concept of measurement is understood but the literate technology is absent, substitutes are used. In Alaga, *dangaw-dangaw* is used to mean approximately 6 inches. Other counting and addition terms are as follows: one *dupa* (arms' length) is about one metre; one *dyna* (trade name of oil which comes in gallon-sized containers) is one gallon; one *kaltik* (Caltex can) is one litre.

Among the Ita fishermen (*Loob data*), various mixes of literate and traditional technology are used: goggles and native spears are for underwater fishing, and sometimes the fish are "stunned" by electrocution using a battery-operated device, surely an introduction to the concept of electricity.

Among the fishermen of Lapu-Lapu, a small fishing boat may be motorized (involving therefore some understanding of engines by reading the manual for operation and simple repair) but the *baroto* (boat) must retain its traditional bamboo poles on both sides (*katig*) for balance. Modern fishing hooks may be bought and used but the traditional lore of catching different kinds of fish by placing different sizes of hooks remain, from 3/4-inch to 4-inch hooks, seven sizes in all.

Chemical fertilizers (involving reading of instructions at least initially) are used alongside organic fertilizers by farmers of Magayon, Calamansi, Palihan and Taka, although at present there are efforts by NGOs to encourage the return to the organic methods because of the high cost of commercial fertilizers and their effect on the soil.

The most interesting report is from Magayon based on observation and interview with a practitioner in folk healing: here is the (abbreviated) account (Hermosa, 1994) which shows the combination of traditional knowledge, herbal and modern medicine, ritual and folk Christianity. It also shows, and this is the main point here, fairly extensive reading and writing because of the complexity of the procedures:

At the Folk Healer's Chapel

The healer, one of the identified wise men in the *barangay* is a 32-year old farmer who practises his trade only on Tuesdays and Fridays. Beside his home is a small chapel, donated by patients and friends, where the healing sessions are held. When asked how he learned his art he said it came as a miracle from God in 1983; for this reason he charges no fee for his work, but patients may give him *alay* (e.g. fruits, vegetables, cigarettes) or offering. These are placed on the altar where a crucifix and images of saints are found. Only those whose illness comes from *kulam* (witchcraft) pay, an amount the healer determines as equivalent to what was paid to the witch by the one who wished the patient ill.

Ailments treated during the course of the whole day observation were varied: sprains, respiratory diseases, skin diseases, delayed or continuous menstruation, possession by evil spirits, insomnia, mental disorder.

For all of these, the first treatment is oil massage with three kinds of oil: one containing a Christian rosary; in another a magic stone; in another roots of some trees. These oils are ritually prepared during Holy Week.

The following prescriptions were given:

> For a girl with skin disease: 3 kinds of leaves with specific number for each (13, 5 and 7) to be boiled in 9 glasses of water (indicating the strength of the decoction) and drunk 3 times a day. Then, Hystacort (a pharmaceutical preparation) for application on the itchy parts. For application at home: 2 kinds of leaves (1, 10 pieces) mashed with one bottle of gin.
>
> For a woman who had miscarriage 3 days before: First the oil massage; then her name and age were written on a piece of pad paper which was kept in the file. Then the healer wrote on another sheet of white paper and burned it; the ashes were placed in a glass of water and drunk by the woman. For treatment at home, the healer prescribed Biogesic (anti-pyretic medicine) 3 times a day; 3 kinds of leaves (10, 7, 7) and 2 kinds of seeds (15 and 1 bag) boiled in one gallon water. Additional treatment included a *novena* (9-day prayer), offerings of 3 kinds of food (specified) and daily bathing with water containing 9 kinds of leaves.

Herbal lore is shown to be extensive, and some pharmaceutical preparations are used. Because of the complexity of the treatment, all the prescriptions are written, as in medical practise. But it must be asked, in any case, whether or not this kind of integration even if it promotes literacy practice leads to rational scientific practice.

New Information Technology and Literate Practice

It is usually supposed that the introduction of more complex literate technology would increase literate practice. For example, as reported in this study (*Magayon data*), one neo-literate interviewed said that because of his newly acquired literacy skills, he could now use the typewriter. However, one respondent (*Taka data*) said that where before he could not write to a relative abroad he could now communicate to him using a voice tape; thus he said there appears to be no pressing need for him to learn to write. This comment must be taken in the context that in the Moslem Filipino communities, writing in the local language (Maranao) which has been reduced to Romanized script is not encouraged, but not everyone is able to write in Arabic. In the same research site, the relatively widespread use of *walkie-talkies* (hand-held two-way radios) was also reported.

While this is the only instance we found in the study to question the validity of the assumption that more complex literate technology would increase literate practice, it may be important to inquire into the effects on literate practice of new literate technology like the calculator or electronic devices, which do not presuppose extensive prior knowledge, extensive writing or even memory.

On the other hand, the widespread use and popularity of a community radio station in Inipon has encouraged previously marginalized groups to write in their opinions for public airing, and even increased letter-writing activities by acting as the town post office where letters are dropped and then announced over the radio for pick-up. The same is true for their radio school which (described in chapter III) uses a group pedagogical process in the distance education mode, promoting both literate and oral practice.

In Corona, the use of slides as part of the educational presentation is a common practice, as a visual aid for the understanding of the text containing new and more complex information, or to document traditional community activities.

All these considerations must be taken into account in drawing up a systematic definition of functional literacy in livelihood-economic activities, to be discussed in the next section.

Towards a Systematic Definition of Functional Literacy in Livelihood-Economic Activities

Previous research in the Philippines on technology transfer in economic systems have shown that, for many reasons, the major activities such as agriculture are the most resistant to change through technology transfer. On the basis of an extensive review of this research literature, Bonifacio (1994) has pointed out the need for a radical shift in the conceptual framework of technology transfer involving the following changes: 1) departure from the premise that the technology to be transferred is necessarily superior to the old method; 2) a deliberate mapping of all the technologies (both traditional and literate) being used in the production systems; and 3) an emphasis on improvement rather than change.

In terms of the present study which focuses on functional literacy, it may be argued that this mapping must include not only the technologies in use but also other elements included in the present analysis such as: 1) the interrelations of knowledge, technology and memory; 2) the nature of the social organization and relations of production; and 3) adaptations, modifications on, and attempts to integrate traditional and literate technology, as well as the consequences of all these for literate and oral practice.

The data matrix could include, for each major economic activity classified according to social organization or relations of production: 1) the constitutive activities (e.g. preparing the field, planting, etc.); 2) the technologies used, whether traditional or literate, or integrated; 3) the knowledge required as well as the sources of this knowledge (e.g.master craftsmen, skilled workers, outside expert); 4) the problems associated with the practice; 5) the solutions that have been attempted and their efficacy; 6) the possible areas for improvement; and 7) the literacy-numeracy and general education needed to effect the improvement.

All of these need to be empirically determined through a relatively simple procedure in which the people themselves play a significant part, not only as sources of information but also as data-gatherers, processors and analysts. Involvement of people in the crucial exercise of determining what knowledge and skills are needed and for what purpose is critical to the process of designing and implementing a literacy program.

The resulting documentation therefore becomes a comprehensive matrix of: 1) literacy problems related to production and commerce, 2) technological/commercial literacy skills needed in the community, 3) the knowledge and skills underlying and required by the activity, and 4) the sources of these from among the community folk whose services can then be tapped for the implementation of a literacy program that is truly community-based in all the meanings of this term. It also places literacy training squarely in the context of existing livelihood-economic activities. This matrix constitutes a comprehensive definition of functional literacy for existing livelihood-economic activities in a given community, to be used as basis for the design of a functional literacy program for these types of activities.

In the case of development projects, the process of determining the relevant literacy skills could begin from the matrix already described, leading to the identification of skills and knowledge required by the technology to be introduced.

The Social Meanings of Literacy Practice

A principal objection to the "autonomous" model of evaluating functional literacy is its "singularity, its separation from the meaning and value which individuals attribute to it" (Harman in Hautecoeur 1990). As many others have pointed out before, the question is more complex than simply being able to separate the literates from the non-literates. If the question were that simple, thousands of "illiterates" would flock to literacy programs in order not to be excluded from the favoured world of the literates.

But why is there a problem of recruitment and sustained attendance in literacy classes?

In this section, we examine two dimensions of literacy practice with respect to socio-cultural activities in order to understand the meaning and value attached to literacy in the context of socio-cultural community activities. These two aspects are: 1) the social meanings of literacy, and 2) the relation of oracy and literacy practice in a given socio-cultural context. The first aspect, it is believed, provides the basis for the understanding of the second aspect; that is, meaning prefigures the practice. Both aspects will be discussed together.

The principal element embedded in the concept of social meaning is the element of choice in order to convey meaning (cf. Reder in Wagner 1987); thus, in socio-linguistics, it has to do with a person's choice of language (where other languages are available) in particular situations in order, for example, to suggest informality, intimacy, or authority. For literacy practice in various Philippine contexts, this element of choice may be extended to include choice not only among languages but also 1) among writing systems (e.g. Roman or Arabic), 2) between oral and written modality, and 3) between the negative and positive value attached to literacy practice.

However, as the data will show, this element of choice must be further qualified by considerations of social stratification, minority-majority relations, religion, and access to available information and knowledge, among others.

Access to Knowledge and the Social Meaning of Literacy

In the traditional society of Boheh Umos both social and economic activities are communal and kinship-based; meanings are available and accessible to all, transmitted by word or example, and limited only by native talent and maturational development. This ideology is summed up in the metaphor of the *pehak* ("We are all a part of one fish gonad.") and in the injunction, "What I eat is what you eat". Decisions are made by consensus and the *nakurah* (leader of the fishing expedition) is chosen to his position by virtue of his knowledge, physical qualities and seniority among male members. Where such knowledge is open to all and where such knowledge is not written, it follows that even the position of leader is theoretically available to all (in this case, male members).

In such a situation, the meaning of functional literacy need not include the ability to read and write. Even the dictionary definition of literate includes as the second and fourth options, "having extensive knowledge, learning or culture", and "knowledgeable or capable, e.g. economically literate" (Webster, 1988). These meanings do not presuppose ability to read and write.

Indeed the researcher for Boheh Umos makes this comment:

> The operational definition of functional literacy that could be made for a community type like Boheh Umos will have to take other qualifiers for consideration. This cannot make the same assumption that functionally literate persons should know how to read and write to be able to realize their full potential as individuals and as members of their community.

Significantly, the necessity to learn to read and write comes only when the Sama of Boheh Umos need to relate to people outside the *komkoman* or *munda'an*. Thus, the expressed need for literacy (in the sense of reading and writing) in order not to be taken advantage of by those not belonging to the *pehak*. In the case of letters that occasionally come to Boheh Umos, no embarrassment accompanies the request for a literate person to read the letter and write an answer, since it is everywhere understood that this knowledge, as it were, is "of the outside", not of the *pehak*.

This is not the case with marginalized groups of a dominant majority where it is reported that one of the reasons for reluctance to join literacy classes is because it is *nakakahiya* (embarrassing). Various white lies are given to explain inability to read or write (e.g. no eyeglasses, unsteady hands) (*Loob data*). Yet, when asked why they want to become literate, one of the most common answers is "to gain knowledge and understand things" (*Magayon, Lapu-Lapu, Magdalena, Labasan and Martires data*).

The difference in the social construction of the meaning of literacy in these two situations is clear. To be a marginal non-literate part of a dominant majority is to be further excluded from the knowledge and information available to that majority (of which theoretically they are a part), but accessible only in print. This is where literacy acquires its current and principal meaning of "ability to read and write", excluding all those possessing only oral knowledge and valorizing only that knowledge which has been written.

When that knowledge is also written in a language not one's own and barely understood (e.g. English), the sense of exclusion becomes even stronger, compounded as it is with poverty, low social status and lack of access to schools where one can learn to read and write in a foreign tongue (English). As one respondent from Magdalena said:

"I wish that I had a chance to go to school so I could speak like an American."

Language, Religion, Literacy, Knowledge and Minority Relations

In the Moslem minority areas, the exclusion by virtue of language takes on a different meaning. In these areas, the languages of the formal schools are English and/or Filipino; the languages of the madaris or community schools are the local language and Arabic; and the *Qur'an* or *Holy Book* is in Arabic. In the media, metropolitan papers are mostly in English, some in Filipino, a few in Cebuano and Arabic but none in the local language (*Taka report*).

Islamic practice, on the other hand, requires the reading of the Qur'an in Arabic, and it is reported that across all age groups the reading of the Qur'an and prayers, all in Arabic, is widely practised. In addition, there is the belief that "Every child of Moslem parents is born Moslem".

The problems related to this situation are eloquently expressed in various ways by the respondents (*Taka data*):

> "How about those reading and writing in Arabic? Should they be considered illiterate? It seems that illiterates are only those who cannot read or write in English and Filipino."
>
> "Why is the life of the Prophet not included in the literacy training? He is our role model."
>
> "Literacy is only for those who want to go to other places."
>
> "We are afraid to participate because it might affect our culture and our way of life."

At the same time, however, there is a recognition that to be able to gain access to more knowledge, one must learn to read and write both English and Filipino, especially English.

Consider the following responses of Moslem Filipinos to various questions:

> "Yes, I learned how to use the telephone during our business dealings with the Christians."
>
> "*Mas malayong nararating ng marunong magbasa sa Ingles at Filipino.*"
> (People who can read in English and Filipino can go far.)

To the question posed to neo-literates on what they can do now that they can read, the following responses were given:

> "Now I can learn more about other countries."
>
> "I can read whatever I like."
>
> "I don't get lost. I can read street signs."
>
> "I can apply for work. Before, in going to the city I had to bring somebody to read the street names." (*Taka data*)

In these sets of examples, there is a clear contradiction between choices and meanings. Choices are dependent on what are available; meanings are held close to the heart especially when those meanings have to do with religious beliefs (Qur'an) and the language (Arabic) in which that kind of knowledge is available. But other kinds of knowledge are available only in English or Filipino. Is it not possible that rather than resolve this contradiction, some Moslem Filipinos just refuse or don't allow their people to go to school where the languages taught may have negative meaning?

Where the decision or choice is to attend school or the literacy training anyway, this contradiction is manifested in subtle and unrecognized ways.

In a relatively new kindergarten school, the languages taught formally are English and Arabic. Note that Maranao, the local language, is not taught. The motto of the school is "Kindergarten for the Survival of Islamic Education".

One of the teaching materials prepared by the teacher (Moslem) was a paper duck on which is written: "God helps those who help themselves." From our own experience and observation, Christians would never think of putting these two disjunctive elements (the duck and the religious saying) together, for the meaning of the sign could be blasphemous. Nor for that matter would a Moslem mix the duck with Allah. But where such meaning is not present in the mind of the teacher, this is just a teaching aid.

The effect of this material and similar others on the development of consciousness among the children is an interesting point for study. In terms of designing a literacy program for Moslem-Filipino areas, one needs to acknowledge that they are afraid that literacy and education may affect their culture and way of life.

Work and Leisure, Learning and the Social Meaning of Literacy

One of the principal reasons given by respondents in almost all research sites for their irregularity of attendance in literacy programs is that it takes them away from work (*Magdalena, Magayon, Calamansi, Lapu-Lapu, Kala data*). However, other reasons and suggestions from the respondents themselves contradict the reason of work. Consider the following statements given by the same group of respondents (*Magayon data*):

Problems cited	*Suggestions for improving the program*
1. Difficulty in recruitment because FL program is not known to many	1. Increase of teaching hours
2. Irregularity of attendance because of work	2. Hiring of full-time and dedicated teachers
3. Limited content (should include livelihood topics)	3. Available and free reading materials
4. Limited teaching time	4. Improved teaching strategies
5. Lack of expertise on the part of the teacher	5. Continuous classes

The problem of irregularity of attendance because of work is negated by the suggestions to increase the number of teaching hours and to hold continuous classes. One explanation for this ambivalence may be that given by respondents from Kala who said: "We are afraid those who go to the literacy classes will not work or be lazy." The negative value attached to becoming literate appears to arise from the traditional separation of school from the world of work or from the real world of the community.

In the Philippine context, such thinking arises from the meaning of education, especially formal education, as the place where people learn things different from what is known in the community, where people who can afford formal education have leisure, where people can have the chance upon graduation to get away from farm work to an office job.

Thus respondents from different sites say about students in school:

> "*Walang malawak na kaalaman ukol sa kapaligiran, maging man sa kabuhayan na dapat sana'y unang matutunan sa paaralan.*" (Students have no extensive knowledge about their environment, not even about livelihood which is the first thing they should learn in school. (*Taka data*)

> "School must teach livelihood skills and the ability to solve problems. This is true especially now in time of crisis." (*Sta. Rosa data*)

Titles of available reading materials in most of the sites suggest a heavy bias towards leisure reading (e.g. comics, pocketbook, tabloids, pornographic materials, advertisements) but too little of serious, informative and technical materials. Where the latter are available (e.g. pamphlets on work-related topics from government offices), these are usually in English and therefore inaccessible to people. (*Data from Kala, Magayon, Magdalena, Alaga, Labasan and Martires*). In fact in the sites, respondents themselves express the need for such technical materials. Here again we have an example of choice (of reading materials) constrained by the availability of reading materials and accessibility of the language in which they are written, as well as a subtle value-laden distinction between serious reading (in English) and trivial reading (in Filipino or a local language), and who may have access to them.

In contrast, the conscious attempt to make knowledge available to all is very apparent in the developmental communities of Inipon and Corona where all radio programs, all newsletters and other printed or written material are in Filipino, most accessible to community members whose local language is *Tagalog*, the language base of Filipino.

To link learning and literacy with the world of work, the most common suggestions are: to schedule the literacy program so that it does not interfere with the planting season, to teach livelihood skills in order to augment income, to develop programs which recognize the interests and concern of adults in the real world, to provide more reading materials related to work. (*Kala, Magayon, Magdalena data*).

Such a program, as respondents imagine it, would change the meaning of learning (i.e. reading and writing) from a leisure activity to one which improves work. The record of success of NGO literacy work in Magayon and Magdalena conducted by Education Forum attests to the viability of a program which links literacy and learning with the real world of adults, and integrates education with productive and empowering activities.

Literacy as Rite of Passage

A closer examination of the numerous constraints to literate practice discussed in the earlier sections shows that they are related to weaknesses in the delivery of literacy programs, to the provision of reading materials, to the socially constructed definitions of literacy which tend to exacerbate minority–majority relations, religious differences, the dichotomy of learning and work, social stratification, and differential status of the languages used in the society.

If a new construction or definition of the social meaning of literacy were to be made, what are the positive meanings of literacy available within the communities?

In the site reports from various communities, particularly from the interviews with neo-literates and those who acquired literacy on their own, the conception of literacy as a "rite of passage" is clear.

Consider some of the responses of neo-literates from various sites to the question of what they can do now that they are literate:

> "I can go to market alone."
>
> "I can travel alone."
>
> "I can write my own letters."
>
> "I can keep my own secrets if I write the letter myself."
>
> "I can count large numbers."
>
> "I can read anything I like."
>
> "I can help my children with their lessons." "My children now respect me."
>
> "I can use the typewriter."
>
> "I can apply for a job."
>
> "I can sign my own marriage contract."
>
> "I can join organizations."

"I can become a barangay official."

"I am no longer embarrassed to voice my opinions freely."

"I can choose my own candidates."

"I have more self-confidence."

"I can write my life story."

Indeed, the transitions suggested by these responses are not trivial matters: they range from the capacity to do what one likes, to the use of new technology, to work, to help others, to gain more self-confidence and earn the respect of one's children, to mark a passage in one's life with a signature on a marriage contract, to become an active participant in civil society, to finally objectify one's life by writing it.

To refer to our own personal experience in literacy work with an NGO, we have always wondered why participants who finish the literacy training program and become literate insist on a celebration after such a program, complete with the rituals of prayer, public recognition in a ceremony through the distribution of certificates duly signed and presented by authorities, public gift-giving and a celebratory sharing of food after the ceremony. It is even reported in some circles that rebels (NPAs) who become literate in their own literacy programs in the hills and mountains insist that their real names be written on the certificates, asking exemption from the rule that they use only their *noms de guerre* in all activities.

All these can be understood in the context of a rite of passage, attesting to the positive value attached to literacy.

Relation between Literate and Oral Practice

In the preceding chapter, we have analysed the distinctions, separations and attempts to integrate oral and literate traditions, both in terms of community knowledge and technology. At the level of specific community activities, we may consider literate (reading and writing) and oral practice along the same line of analysis.

The conventional thinking has been that there is some "great divide" between oral and literate modes of language, thus the usual distinction between an oral and a literate tradition as we ourselves have done restrictively in the previous chapters. We follow B. V. Street (1987) who emphasizes the overlap and interaction of the oral and literate modes of language, two sides of the same coin, as it were.

Beyond the observation of overlap and interaction between the spoken and written modes of language characterized, among others, by the capacity of people without a written language to use symbols to signify their thought and their words, we note from our data a more subtle process that occurs at the individual level, when a previously non-literate individual in a literate society becomes literate. It is in this context that we have characterized the fact of becoming literate as a rite of passage.

Consider three sets of examples: 1) what non-literates and neo-literates from various sites in the middle of our typology of communities say about themselves; 2) what non-literates from Boheh Umos (and one from Kala) say; and 3) what the Corona site report says:

1. Non-literates

The world is dark for me. I don't know where to go, and what to do to help myself.

I will always remain a sugar worker.

I feel shy and inferior

I don't know how to explain things.

I feel sorry for myself.

It is not decent to live in a world where everybody reads but you cannot even recognize your name in print.

Neo-literates

I can help myself. I can make decisions for myself.

I have initiative.

I am proud of myself because I know what I'm doing to my life.

I can now approach other people.

Now I know what I don't know.

Before I have limited opinions. Now I am open to new ideas.

I can write my secret thoughts in my own letters to my friends and relatives.

2. On the other hand, non-literates from Boheh Umos, on one end of our typology of communities, express none of these anxieties (except when they have to go outside the *komkoman*); while a non-literate farmer from Kala said "What I know is sufficient for me."

3. At the other end of our typology of communities, in Corona, the site report states (Braid and Tuazon, 1994): "Illiteracy among some members do not seem to have hindered them from pursuing development goals. The experience of Corona illustrates how a problem situation or a development goal can be a moving force in stoking people's desire to be better educated without any deliberate effort by an outside party". The site report further states that both oracy and literacy skills are learned at the same time by the members of the people's organization: participating in discussions, facilitating meetings or seminar, synthesizing discussions, bargaining and negotiation, public speaking, news-writing.

What is a possible explanation for these differences in the three sets of data? On one hand, we have statements of respondents from the communities in the middle of the typology which describe the acquisition of literacy skills as almost an epiphany; from Boheh Umos, respondents express no anxiety over their non-literacy; in Corona, we sense an almost matter-of-fact attitude of respondents about the passage of individuals from oral (non-literate) to literate practice in which both oral and literate skills are integrated.

If we return to the square grid in chapter IV in which we tried to plot the passage of communities from the oral to the literate tradition, it may be possible that such a passage occurs as well at the individual level, explaining therefore both the absence of anxiety about being non-literate among the Boheh Umos respondents and the matter-of-fact attitude of the Corona respondents.

In an oral society like Boheh Umos where orality is the practice or norm, the absence of literate practice is of no moment; in an organization where both oral and literate practice are becoming integrated, the acquisition of literacy by individuals will come in due course ("in order to get things done"), and one therefore can be matter-of-fact about it.

In contrast, the achievement of literacy by marginalized individuals in a community where literate practice is increasingly becoming the norm, and where their illiteracy is precisely one of the reasons for their marginalization, the acquisition of literacy indeed becomes an authentic rite of passage, a step towards the achievement of human agency: to make decisions for oneself, to have initiative, to know what one does not know, even to share one's secrets only with those one chooses. The "culture of silence" in the sense of Freire is related both to literate and oral practice, as well as to self-concept and human agency.

Stated in another way and in terms of our square grid (in chapter IV) the "great divide" between oracy and literacy does not happen even at the individual level under conditions of equity and communality; it happens only when people who are already marginalized (e.g. poverty, low status, unequal provisions in education) become even more so by reason of their illiteracy. Thus, the salience of the nature of the community in its social organization and distribution in understanding the context of both oral and literate practice.

Loss of Community, Development of a Participant Community and Literacy Practice

We further examine the salience of community in determining the extent and nature of both oracy and literacy practice in two contrasting situations: the loss of community in the refugee and resettlement communities after Mt. Pinatubo (*Sta. Rosa and Loob*), and the development of a community towards participatory democracy (*Corona*). This point is still along our present thesis because it raises the question of what happens to literacy in a process of social change involving changes in the nature of the social organization and the underlying meaning of community.

In the previous discussions, the reference to the term "community" was understood to mean "a natural social formation whose members recognize themselves as a group bound together by their living in a more or less contiguous area or neighbourhood, common activities, as well as ethnolinguistic, income class and occupational similarities." By virtue of long face-to-face relations and more or less common activities, the ties that bind members of community, as defined, assume a reality and a meaning that goes beyond the simple sum of all their similarities.

It is in this sense of community that the respondents in the transitional– disaster communities say, "Our greatest loss is the loss of our community," as objectively defined by day-to-day activities, neighbours, friends and even the graves of those long dead. Thus, the attempts to return to their homes if only to clean the presumed premises (*Sta. Rosa data*).

The over-all impact of this loss of community among respondents from both disaster communities is a general sense of "bewilderment, resignation and passivity" and its principal manifestation is "doing nothing". Among the children, it is "poor memory, sleepiness, restlessness, lack of interest in school" (*Sta. Rosa and Loob data*).

In terms of literacy practice, adult respondents reported that "they did not find the need for reading and writing skills in their present day-to-day life'" even as it is also reported that a high 76% know how to read and write, and over 88% are numerate. Both young and adult respondents, however, were one in saying that the school and the NGO/GO programs in their camp or resettlement site should "make school and education relevant by teaching new livelihood and problem solving skills in the face of crisis" (*Sta. Rosa and Loob data*). Whether or not these new skills involve literacy is of little importance; it is to build a life again and regain the sense of community. Indeed, an examination of the perceived livelihood needs enumerated by respondents made no mention of any literacy or literacy-related need, although it was reported that the Department of Social Welfare and Development was running a literacy program for displaced residents (*Sta. Rosa data*).

In contrast, we have the case of one community (Corona) of the developmental type in which a relatively modern version of participatory democracy has definitely evolved. In this community, the initial basis of "community" was as originally defined: a natural social formation of fisherfolk living near Laguna Lake, which is their main source of livelihood. They had earlier organized themselves into an essentially occupation-based group.

In the early 1980s, it became apparent that the lake was fast becoming degraded. In the face of this problem, this organization of fisherfolk transformed itself into a multi-sectoral group whose main thrust would be mobilization and advocacy on the issue of the Laguna Lake degradation.

Thus, in transforming the original occupation-based organization into a multi-sectoral issue-based organization, the organization had evolved into a political formation. In the Philippine context, this type of political formation is called a people's organization (PO). Since then, this PO has enlarged its thrusts to other issues (e.g., on the passing of legislation about fisherfolk in the Philippines, on the transformation of areas around the Lake into an industrial zone with all its environmental implications), essentially economic but necessarily also political. Its overall mission is now summarized in the call: "Towards a just and humane society" (*Corona data*).

In this development, the meaning of the term community has been modified, from a natural occupation-based social formation to a multi-sectoral issue-based political formation.

What is the impact of this change on literacy practice within the organization? Because of the general need to educate its members on the issues in order to ensure social participation, advocacy and mobilization, the organization has evolved a developmental process in which functional literacy and continuing education occupy a central place, although there is no separate literacy or education program, as such.

Within this process, as described in the previous chapter, both oracy and literacy practice have expanded as part of the developmental process towards participatory democracy. And it is within this context that we understand the meaning of the statement in the Corona site report:

> Even limited formal education among some members seems never to have dramatically hindered any undertaking of the organization. In fact, leaders do not consider illiteracy or low educational attainment as a problem nor have they taken any note of it at all. Becoming literate perhaps only happened to be a requirement for people to get things done.

Synthesis of the Social Meanings of Literacy and Oracy Practice

In this section, we addressed two questions critical to the design of a viable functional literacy program : 1) Why is there a problem of recruitment and sustained attendance in literacy classes? 2) If a new FL program would be designed, what positive meanings and values associated with literacy are already available in the communities?

Using the concept of the social meaning of literacy and the principal elements of choice and constraint as guides to the analysis, we demonstrated from the data that in fact the first problem given above (recruitment and sustained attendance) is a function of:

1) access to available knowledge, 2) exclusion from this knowledge due to social stratification, minority-majority relations, use of a foreign language tied to social meanings of prestige, status and religion, and 3) dichotomy of literacy (construed as leisure) and work.

On the other hand, it has also been shown that positive meanings and values are already associated with literacy in the community, which meanings could then be used as the starting point for conceptualizing an FL program.

A finer point with respect to to these positive meanings was made in the analysis of the relation between literacy and oracy practice in which it was argued that the passage of a community from an oral to a literate tradition finds its analogue in the passage of individuals from strict oracy to the integration also at the individual level of oral and literate practice.

The three sets of statements of individuals from different types of communities demonstrate the close interrelation between the acquisition of literacy by individuals and the nature and level of literacy practice within the community, as constrained by social structural factors such as access to available knowledge, social stratification, and minority-majority relations, among others.

In a strictly oral community like Boheh Umos, the acquisition of literacy is of no moment (What for?) except when the time comes that they become acculturated into land-based Sama, in which case, greater relations with social institutions such as government and the market would require becoming literate. The same is true, but in a limited way, with the farmer from Kala who might eventually find it necessary to have to improve his agricultural practice by reading or getting information about possible improvements in the technology of rice-terracing agriculture.

Among the respondents from communities in the middle of the typology, the acquisition of literacy becomes truly a rite of passage, marking the individual's passage from the margin to the mainstream where constraining social structural factors might no longer exercise such tight limitations on his/her participation in the literate activities of community life (e.g. "I am no longer afraid to approach people;" "I can become a *barangay* official;" "I will no longer be fooled by *hacenderos* because I can compute my wages." Here the passage is dramatic, in Freire's terms, from being an object of the socio-historical process to its subject (e.g. "I can write my own life story").

The non-literate Corona respondents know for a fact that in the course of the social project they will become literate because they belong to a community or organization which has embarked on a course towards development where equity, participation and transformation are the principal considerations.

The contrasting examples of Corona and the uprooted disaster communities further demonstrate the salience of community as the matrix from which both literacy and oracy practice in individuals can arise.

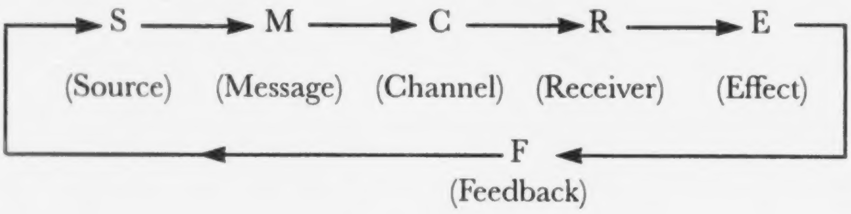
Literacy Practice and People's Participation in Political-Civic Activities

Thus far in this section we have shown that aspects of practice vary in relation to the nature of the activity. For livelihood-economic activities, the type and level of technology appears to be the determining factor; for socio-cultural activities, it is the social meaning attached to the literate practice.

In this sub-section we attempt to demonstrate from the data that the nature of political participation in the community at large is the determinant for understanding literacy practice in relation to political-civic activities. The most popular political-civic activity involves elections.

From the site reports, at least four general levels of people's participation in the Philippine setting can be identified. Each of these is described below using examples drawn from the sites. It is understood that this typology is for analytical purposes only. As in all typologies, we assume that such "pure" states exist although this is not strictly so in real life. The analytical framework for this typology with specific reference to literacy practice is the standard communication model:

Figure 4: Standard Communication Model



The first level is the "voting" level, reported by all sites, a very popular but essentially passive political exercise occurring at regular intervals.

Voting need not always be a passive exercise but it is so in some research sites because individuals operating at this level mainly receive information through various channels (radio, print, neighbourhood groups, TV, etc.). Their decision-making is based mainly on this received information.

Literate practice in this activity and at this level is minimal, perhaps involving only the reading of billboards, leaflets and other campaign materials. However, it is also reported that much oral practice is involved, as in discussion of the relative merits of certain political candidates. Oral practice becomes even more intense at the level of local (barangay) elections where people have more to say about their candidates.

The intense focus on personal characteristics is due to the fact that in the Philippines, political party platforms are ill-defined or even non-existent. Very rarely do people in the sites at this level give feedback to the elected candidates (e.g. letters, petitions, etc.) because most if not all of the time they operate outside the usual channels of public opinion.

The second level may be called the "limited participant" in which interest in the political-civic process is expressed through making oneself available for recruitment to certain activities, although there is as yet no real membership in any political or civic organization. To this group belong the volunteer poll watchers, copiers of election returns, distributors of leaflets, as well as signatories in letters, petitions or manifestos of various kinds (e.g. to stop demolition, illegal logging, practice of mail-order brides, clean-up drives etc.).

Literate practice at this level could become a little more extensive particularly where issues are concerned, for which reading materials are available. Sources of information could come from outside as well as inside the community. In fact, as in the case of campaigns against illegal logging and strip mining (*Inipon, Corona, Kala data*), even the signatories themselves could be sources of information. Thus, the channels of communication could also become more varied. It is at this point where, as observed earlier in this section, both literacy and oracy practice increase simultaneously. Some feedback occurs at this level when signatories follow up demands or petitions by visits to city hall, rallies in front of Congress and other such demonstrations. It will be noted that in the Magdalena data, one of the wise persons is a good orator and public speaker because such skills become necessary at this level.

The third level of people's participation has to do with organized and sustained action on an issue or demand. This is clearly seen in the petition of Labasan residents to the National Housing Authority to open a service road and to distribute lots for amortization. The first activity was to organize the residents. It was also reported that others wanted to remain "invisible" by refusing to join the organization. This notion of "invisibility" with respect to people's participation appears to be an interesting point for further study. Literate practice at this level becomes even more extensive because of the need to understand more complex issues where the individuals have a personal stake, requiring therefore the reading of more complex material (e.g. legal documents).

Sources of information at this level of practice would include experts or those perceived to be experts, as well as other outside people (catalysts) who could identify and explain courses of action heretofore unknown or unavailable to the community folk. Thus, it will be noted that in Magayon, where many projects and issues of the developmental type have been set up (e.g. co-operatives, action for agrarian reform, education and production), one of the recognized wise persons is a college undergraduate perceived as a legal expert. In Corona, the person in charge of the communication program, reached only Grade 2 but is considered a wise person.

The fourth level of participation here called the "advocacy-reform" level is clearly demonstrated in the cases of Inipon and Corona where people participate on a sustained and organized basis to advocate changes or reforms in one or all aspects of the socio-economic structure.

Literate practice at this level becomes subsumed to, and an integral part of, the change process in which such activities as "advocacy, mobilization, discussion, negotiations" (*Inipon and Corona data*) are involved.

A fifth level also occurring in the Philippine setting is rebel or revolutionary action but this is outside the scope of the present analysis.

Underlying these processes and literate practice at various levels is the assumption, often repeated, of the interactive relation between people's activities, values and attitudes and the social context in which these activities could or could not be possible.

A General Synthesis of the Contexts of Literacy Practice

The exploration of the contexts of literacy practice detailed in the preceding chapters was an attempt to understand the literacy situation in marginal Philippine communities by tracing the complex and ongoing route of literacy in a process of social change rooted in colonization. By consistently taking the people's point of view in this analysis, we are able to understand the cultural and social structural arrangements which they are continuing to create as collective responses to the forcible introduction of a different literate tradition in the midst of an incipient native literate tradition which died on the vine, as it were. Essentially, this was and continues to be a process in which the entry into the new literate tradition became confounded with property relations and various other social distributions: of knowledge and the language(s) in which it is encoded, as well as of general cultural and educational provision.

In order to try to chart this ongoing process in which literacy is the major element, we developed a typology of marginal Philippine communities which we considered to be at various stages of this process. It is in this sense that we have conceptualized the three contexts of literacy practice, analysed in the preceding chapters.

Community Life as Context of Social Practice

Precisely because we were trying to analyse an ongoing process of social change involving literacy practice in various community types, we conceptualized the first context as community life itself (chapter III), in particular, the nature of relations among the members, their activities, and the processes of continuity or change that characterize their community life.

In describing the interrelations of these three elements, we began to understand the ways in which literate practice enters or does not enter into community life and activities.

Based on our typology of marginal communities, we saw how conditions of equity, solidarity and communality of purpose located in an oral tradition, as exemplified in Boheh Umos, has resulted in a continuity of cultural processes as well as of its basic social organization. No doubt, this continuity is also assured by the fact that as a community of sea nomads, it is able to escape from external and potentially threatening forces, including the introduction of literate practice, as a collectivity and therefore with little dislocation.

Moving on to the community types in the middle of the typology, we again note the various ways by which these elements of community life are changed, where the impetus for change comes from, and how these changes are reflected in the nature and extent of literate practice in the community.

In general, we note that where the social organization is characterized by communality and solidarity whose basis is a community-based and relatively well-established economic activity as in Kala, the community is able to balance continuity and change at a pace that promotes the least dislocation. At the same time, we note that the expansion of literate practice is attuned to this pace. It is fair to say that in this type of community, the process of change, although not entirely unproblematic, remains in people's hands.

This does not appear to be the case in Alaga where continuity cannot be ensured by the precariousness of their lives as swidden farmers, while the absence of a strong basis for community, partly on account of their dispersed family-based farms, explains the lack of capacity to internally generate a process of change. In this community, both education and literacy are seen as the external factors that would contribute to a change and an improvement in their community life.

The two uprooted communities meanwhile help us to understand what happens when the basis for community is lost and how literate practice suffers in the process.

The four lowland rural communities exemplify varying attempts to respond to change processes, most of which are outside their control. Of these, we have identified three elements of social organization which the people have developed as their bases of community life: the family, the practice of Christianity, and elections. Note that these elements are best exemplified respectively in economic, in socio-cultural and political-civic community activities. In other words, what we are seeing here is that in the process of segmentation of the social organization, the family became the basic organizing element of economic activity; Christianity for socio-cultural life and elections for political-civic life.

The familistic basis of Philippine social organization is well-documented in research, but it must be pointed out that this is already a change, perhaps regressive, from the communal life that characterizes Kala, even as we saw its beginnings in Alaga where the swidden farming activity necessitated an essentially family-based orientation. The practice of Christianity, on the other hand, organizes socio-cultural life, with the local Church serving as the physical expression and the focus for activities in which the entire community can participate. The preponderance of socio-cultural activities centred around the practice of Christianity (e.g. *fiestas*, Bible studies, prayer meetings, *novenas*) attests to this.

Elections, on the other hand, organize the people's political-civic life. Note that we do not refer here to political practice, in the sense of participation in decision-making, but merely to the periodic exercise of the right to vote. This is the only major political activity in which everyone who is literate can participate since in the Philippines, marginal people remain essentially outside the ambit of real political practice.

A more extensive analysis of these three elements of social organization, which is beyond the scope of this study, will reveal the ways in which each of these elements mediate the processes of continuity and change within communities. Literate practice in relation to these three elements is variously described, based on the requirements of practice in each of these domains.

In the Moslem community with its separate history and tradition, the principal basis of community life remains to be Islamic practice which serves as the focus and source of integration of the community, even as its own processes of continuity and change also include the management of its ambivalent relation with the dominant Christian majorities.

Among the urban poor groups, absence or weakness of a basis of community life is occasioned by their precarious and shifting existence characterized by odd jobs, impermanent addresses, very sub-standard living conditions and the ever present threat of demolition of their very community, as it were. One group has organized itself in an effort to establish community among the dwellers; but the processes of change, always on the fast track in a metropolitan setting, remain externally generated even as urban folk attempt to accommodate to these changes through literate practice, among others, in shifting, diffused and unfocused ways.

The two developmental communities while still poor and marginalized are markedly different from the other groups in their attempt to recover some control of the change processes. In a manner of speaking, both are building new communities: in the case of Inipon, still through the auspices of the local Church which itself has moved in its own orientation from socio-cultural to include the political as well. In the case of Corona, the fisherfolk themselves have consciously made a change in their community life by enlarging the basis of their social organization from an occupation-based to a more comprehensive political and issue-based organization. In this process of building new communities, as it were, literate practice and general education play very significant roles.

Community Knowledge and the Passage to a Literate Tradition

The second context of literacy practice focused on the route of communities in the process of social change in their passage from an oral to a literate tradition, using community knowledge as the basis for analysis. The typology of communities was again used as the basis for a synchronic analysis of an essentially diachronic process, using the traditional and predominantly oral community of Boheh Umos as some kind of a contemporary baseline of what many Philippine communities were like before colonization.

Given the history of the introduction of the Roman script in the Philippines under colonization, as well as the language in which knowledge in this script was encoded (first Spanish and then English), it seemed reasonable to hypothesize that the passage from an oral to a literate tradition in these marginal communities could be studied synchronically by studying people's everyday knowledge (here referred to as community knowledge) in its passage from a wholly oral tradition, to the entry of a different and a literate tradition, to attempts by people to integrate their traditional knowledge in the oral tradition with their literate knowledge.

The traditional oral community of Boheh Umos, characterized in its social organization by equity, communalism and participation, holds on to its community knowledge all encoded in the oral tradition. The traditional community of Kala holds on to its extensive knowledge of the rice terracing agriculture encoded in the oral mode, and this continuity is relatively well ensured because it is part of a whole socio-cultural system; while the little literate knowledge they possess is confined to elements peripheral to this agricultural system. On the other hand in Alaga, lacking a well-established production system, traditional knowledge is concentrated in cultural forms (epics, songs, and ballads) and animistic beliefs related to daily activities, even as literate knowledge increases on account of their marginal participation in a cash economy, and younger people begin to express some doubts about traditional beliefs.

In Taka, Islam which is encoded in a literate tradition, helps to maintain the boundaries of acceptable knowledge, defending it but not entirely, from both pre-Islamic and Westernized knowledge.

In the Christian lowland rural communities, the two streams of traditional and literate knowledge become distinct and separate bodies of knowledge, even as elite knowledge which is predominantly literate and Westernized marginalizes both their traditional and literate knowledge. In the urban poor communities, traditional knowledge is reduced and further fractured while the expanding literate knowledge remains diffused, unintegrated, shifting and without focus.

Inipon and particularly Corona, the developmental communities in this typology, are attempting to gain sovereignty over their knowledge, in the context of a new social organization, characterized as in Boheh Umos by equity, solidarity and communality, oriented towards an explicit and common goal.

Significantly, the same elements of language, knowledge and literacy which had separated community knowledge into two streams are used for the integration of the two bodies of knowledge. We have identified six main modes of integration: 1) the use of their own language, 2) consistently encouraging literate practice, 3) combining both traditional and literate knowledge into new forms, 4) coining new word-combinations to express new concepts, 5) attempting to incorporate the characteristics of their oral expression into the written mode, and 6) seeing to it that even the mode of producing their own text is under their control by using only whatever technology is available to them.

It will be noted that these modes of integration are not intended to make a return to the original state of the "primitive savage" as is usually the thinking of those who romanticize indigenous knowledge. Underlying these attempts to integrate traditional and literate knowledge is the absence of this illusion, and the understanding that these new forms of integration created by the people themselves are for the explicit political purpose of transforming themselves in order to enter the mainstream which they hope to also transform in the process.

A Graphic Presentation of the Passage to a Literate Tradition

Based on all of the insights drawn from the synchronic analysis of the communities, we attempted to advance the new formulation that the major element in this passage is the process of objectification, conceptualized as the capacity of people to abstract their knowledge from their practice, following Levy-Bruhl's notion that writing as a process of objectification establishes a different kind of relationship between the word and its referent, a relationship that is more general, more abstract and less connected with particularities of person, place and time.

We reasoned that it is not only writing that does this; for even before writing takes place, one must have the capacity to decide on what to write, that is, to verbalize one's knowledge; a capacity therefore to abstract from practice what are considered to be its important or essential elements.

If it is correct to say that the reporting of community knowledge by respondents amounts to such an act of abstraction, then the "size" of the knowledge reported corresponds to the relative capacity for objectification or abstraction.

This formulation follows from Freire's pedagogical process. Such an objectification even before the introduction of writing, *per se*, is the identification by the participants themselves of the generative words which, in a way, represent the synthesis, the objective oral symbols of the essential features of their referent situation. Thus, participants are encouraged in this pedagogy to identify those generative words in terms of the most basic emotions attendant to them (i.e. words that when you think about them fill you with joy, fear, hatred, pain, and love). In reporting community knowledge we are essentially asking respondents to go through the process of identifying and verbalizing what to them are the most essential features of their knowledge.

Thus, the relative "size" of what people in the community can verbalize may be used as an index of how far they are as a community along the route to a literate tradition. Moreover, the intersection of the relative "sizes" of their reported traditional and literate knowledge gives us a composite index of the integration of these two aspects of their community knowledge.

By plotting these composite indices on a square grid we can identify the "deviance" of these communities from a hypothetical trajectory from the oral to a literate tradition, under ideal conditions where the only new element introduced is the invention of a script that became accessible to everyone.

Using Boheh Umos as baseline, we find that, plotted against the ideal trajectory, Kala is the least deviant; Alaga and the urban poor communities have the largest deviations from this trajectory although in opposite directions; and the lowland Christian rural communities are relatively closer to this trajectory if some organizing principle could be found to integrate their literate and traditional knowledge as what Inipon and Corona are doing.

From this formulation, we advance the thesis that three elements may be crucial to the understanding of the passage to the literate tradition, under conditions similar to those obtaining in the Philippines: 1) capacity of individuals to abstract or objectify their knowledge from their practice; 2) sustained attempts to integrate traditional and literate knowledge and to render these in written form; and 3) presence of a common social project to serve as focus of and integrating element in the whole process.

More rigorous tests of this preliminary hypothesis will be useful to a better understanding of the passage of communities to a literate tradition.

Practice, Meanings and Definitions of Functional Literacy as the Third Context of Literacy Practice

An even more focused analysis of literacy practice was the analysis of the practice, meanings and definitions of functional literacy, conceptualized as the third context of literacy practice.

The aspects of community life used as the basis of this analysis were community activities classified into livelihood-economic, socio-cultural and political-civic. The aspect of technology was also included, as an element which could be classified into traditional or literate technology, analogous to the way we classified community knowledge.

In this analysis, we tried to locate literate practice by considering 1) the interrelations of economic activities, technology, knowledge, memory and literate practice; 2) the relation of literacy practice to social organization and the relations of production; and 3) attempts to modify and integrate traditional and literate technology and the effects of these on literate practice.

Our data, this time analysed across communities instead of by community type, show that literacy practice varies according to the dynamics among these elements. Except for those instances where a wholly traditional system operates, the situation is characterized by attempts of people to make the best of an essentially fractured and flawed situation: using memory where literacy skills are not available, making substitutes for technology where none is available, increasing numeracy skills to make the most of an exploitative feudal relation, among other combinations. The most extreme situation is found in the folk healer's practice where elements of magic, animistic beliefs, folk Christianity, herbal lore and modern medicine are put together, willy-nilly, to provide relief for pain and illness.

But in other cases, usually under conditions of greater rationality and participation, attempts to integrate traditional and literate knowledge and technology are noted: in the return to limited communalism to improve their economic situation as in co-operatives formation; and in utilizing the best features from both bodies of knowledge and technology as in the creative use of radio and slides to facilitate and increase literacy practice.

Various social meanings of literacy practice were also explored particularly in the element of choice (i.e. of language, writing systems, oral and written modality, negative and positive values attached to literacy practice) as mediated by social stratification, religion, minority-majority relations and access to available information and knowledge. It will be noted that these same factors have their beginnings in the introduction of the Roman script, as detailed in the historical sketch in chapter IV.

On the other hand, we note the positive meanings attached to literacy precisely by those who have been marginalized by it, the passage to literacy being construed as a solemn rite of passage.

A finer point with respect to these positive meanings of literacy was made in the analysis of the relation between literacy and oracy practice in which we argued that the passage of a community from an oral to a literate tradition finds its analogue in the passage of individuals from strict oracy to the integration at the individual level of oral and literate practice. In this passage, the nature of the social organization characterized by participation of members is important as a social support for the integration, demonstrating once again the salience of community as the matrix from which both literacy and oracy practice in individuals can arise.

For political-civic activities, it is this same participation which largely determines both oral and literate practice. In this analysis, we identified four general levels of people's participation in elections and related political activities. We have shown that both literacy and oracy practice increase with increased and organized participation in political practice this time to include not only elections but also authentic participation and exercise of power in decision-making that affects their lives and their communities.

CHAPTER VI

Constraints in The Relation Between Literacy and Development

TWO MAJOR IMPLICIT ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLIE mass literacy campaigns, non-formal adult literacy programs and the general notion of the "eradication of illiteracy." The first is that literacy in the population leads to literacy practice; thus, the emphasis on literacy measures to determine individual literacy levels later on to be generalized to the population. The second is that literacy leads to development. In both instances, the relation is assumed to be simple and straightforward. The validation of these two assumptions comprise the main problematic of the present study.

In the earlier chapters where we investigated the different contexts of literacy practice, we have demonstrated that the following major findings in the Philippine context question the validity of the first assumption:

1. Literacy practice varies according to the nature of the relations among community members and the capacity of the community to generate and sustain processes of continuity or change. In the case of the Philippines, these two elements of community life were shown to vary according to the six types of marginal communities, from traditional to developmental, as defined.

2. If we construe the nature of literacy practice in a community as reflective of the state of its passage from an oral to a literate tradition, it is fair to say that literacy practice is a function of: a) the capacity of individuals to abstract or objectify their knowledge from their practice, b) sustained

attempts to integrate traditional and literate knowledge and to render these in written form; and c) presence of a common social project to serve as focus of and integrating element in the whole process of transition from an oral to a literate tradition.
Communities in our typology have been shown to vary on these three factors.

3. Literacy and oracy practice vary according to the practice and meanings attached to literacy. The variations are related to: a) the interrelations of technology, knowledge and meaning in livelihood-economic activities; b) the nature of the social organization, its demands on member participation and accountability, and the impact of these on both literacy and oracy practice; c) the exclusion of people from literate practice because of lack of access to knowledge, d) the language and religion situation exacerbating majority-minority relations in the population; e) the dichotomy between literacy (construed as leisure activity) and work; f) literacy as rite of passage, and g) the level of people's participation in political-civic activities.
Thus, the relation of literacy (in terms of literacy skills) and literacy practice is not always simple and straightforward; that is, it does not always follow that if people are literate, widespread literacy practice will be ensured, for the latter is dependent, among others, on the contexts of literacy practice in community life, in all its ramifications.

On these basis, it is fair to say that in understanding the relation between acquisition of literacy and literacy practice, it is necessary to understand first of all what happens to literacy in a process of social change involving changes in the nature of the social organization, the passage of the community to the literate tradition, and the actual practice and meanings attached to literacy within the community.

From all these main points with respect to the context of literacy, we can see that the idea of a single measure for literacy or even a continuum is not only inadequate as a basis for program design but also a distortion of the reality of people's lives in which literacy practice may or may not be imbedded. In these findings we can already sense some of the reasons why the present notion of "eradicating illiteracy" is bound to frustrate the best intentions of many concerned individuals, policy makers, national governments and international agencies.

In this section, we propose to interrogate the second assumption behind some present formulations regarding literacy: that there is an equally simple and straightforward relation between literacy and development. This formulation may be stated as follows: If individuals become literate, both individual and social development will follow. We shall interrogate this formulation on the basis of our definition of development (chapter II) in which three elements are important: 1) it places man/woman at the centre of development; 2) it assumes his/her creative potential to participate meaningfully in the entire development process; and 3) it recognizes that social change must start with how people themselves respond to the forces which constrain or encourage social transformation. In the Philippine case, the interrogation of this relation between literacy and development is important because, as Anderson and Bowman (1965) have found in their study, literacy is inversely related to economic growth in the Philippines, one of their few negative examples.

In this section we propose to interrogate this proposition by examining the possible constraints to this relation. We have identified three possible interrelated factors that could possibly constrain the straightforward relation between literacy and development: 1) the retention, loss and acquisition of literacy, 2) the reasons for sustainability or non-sustainability of adult literacy programs, and 3) the relation between literacy practice and development processes, if any, in the community.

Retention, Loss and Acquisition of Literacy

The most telling observation of the performance of formal education in the Philippines has been made by Cortes (1992):

> The phenomenal growth and expansion of the Philippine school system appears to have made little change in the life of the large majority of the population 6 or 7 years and older whose highest

> educational attainment has not gone beyond elementary education. The general observation in the 1960s that the Philippines is a nation of fifth graders who lack proficiency in the 3Rs and skills for gainful employment, was still true in the 80s.
>
> ... Access to educational opportunities and the distribution of effects and benefits derived from formal education are far from equitable. Those who have access to more resources are the more affluent communities or those with strong connections in government. The children who benefit most from formal education are those who belong to the upper class or who reside in more economically developed regions. The same observation applies to access to quality education and benefits derived from such education.

And what of the drop-outs from this system, the children and adolescents from marginal communities who become adults, the eventual target participants of non-formal literacy and education programs? A composite profile of the drop-outs based on data from our present study and on a 1983 study of literacy retention done by the Department of Education on two large national samples (N=8009 and 1420) is given below:

> Four out of every 5 drop-outs left school between Grades 3 and 5, with the highest frequency at Grade 4, owing to poverty, incomplete elementary schools (up to Grade 4 only), distance of the school from the house, and migration. About 16 out of 100 of these drop-outs increased their literacy skills from work or other community experience for an equivalent of 2 to 5 grades higher, while the rest (84) retrogressed in their knowledge and skills by an equivalent of two grade levels. Of the three academic subjects tested (Filipino, English and Mathematics), English had the most losers.
>
> The general probability for a drop-out to retrogress is present whatever grade level s/he drops out from; however, the possibility for retrogression is higher if s/he drops out at Grade 3 or below. In the present study, when drop-outs were asked what literacy skills they have retained, their answers ranged from nothing or about nothing, to writing their names, reading, basic addition and subtraction, counting up to 100, some English words, some school poems and songs, some national heroes, some stories.

Those who said they have forgotten skills they learned in school cite the following reasons: 1) lack of opportunity to use skills learned in school in their daily lives or activities, 2) lack of reading materials and opportunities for writing, 3) lack of access and exposure to media especially print, 4) no opportunity to attend non-formal literacy training because of work, a problem particularly true for married women.

On the other hand, drop-outs who do not revert to illiteracy ascribe their retention of literacy skills to: 1) involvement in community activities where literacy skills are practised and new ones are learned, 2) application of skills learned in school to work and daily activities, and 3) the need to learn new skills because their work and other community activities require these.

The reasons for retention of literacy skills learned in school by drop-outs are reiterated by those who acquired literacy on their own.

In the present study, efforts were exerted to find individuals who learned to read and write on their own. Twenty-three such individuals from several sites were found and interviewed for this study. It is significant that all of them learned these skills originally in the home language or in Filipino, and that none of them has reverted to illiteracy. Here are some of their stories:

Vignette no 1

> Mang Tomas is a farmer in Calamansi, Mindoro who never went to school and learned how to read, write, count and compute with the help of one of his children.
>
> He applies these skills in selling his farm produce. According to him, they are a great help in coping with opportunists. He says, "*Mahirap kung magbebenta. Hindi mo alam kung niloloko ka na, mabuti kung laging kasama ang anak*" (It's difficult when you're selling and you don't know how to compute. You don't know if you are being taken advantage of. It's all right if your child is always with you to do the computation.). He added that while it was difficult to learn on his own, and that he prefers having someone to teach him these skills, he has no choice because there is no literacy program for old people like him in their community. At present, he is able to gradually broaden his literacy and numeracy skills with the help of other members of his household.

His advice to those who want to become literate is that they should be persistent and diligent so that they will not lose the skills learned.

Vignette no 2

A 46-year old labourer in Alaga, Iloilo, Mang Carding learned basic literacy and numeracy skills on the job. He wanted to go to school but was not allowed to do so because of work. As it was, he found it difficult to learn on his own. He says, "*Mahirap makaintindi agad. Mahirap magkuwenta ng pera pati mga bagay na binibilang at sinusukat*" (It's difficult to comprehend things. It's also difficult to count money and measure things). This difficulty was offset, however, by his strong desire to learn. Now, he is able to apply his acquired skills in carpentry and other household chores, in his buy-and-sell business (banana and firewood), and in doing mechanical repairs. With his children's help, he is able to continue to improve his literacy skills.

Vignette no 3

Aling Rosing from Alaga works as a domestic helper. She is 31 years old. A neighbour taught her how to read, write, count and compute. Although she was interested to go to school, she had no money to spare for tuition. Indeed, as she puts it, "*Kailangang magtrabaho para kumain*" (I had to work in order to eat). But she made it a point to learn some basic skills which she uses in such activities as voting and computing the price of basic commodities. For Aling Rosing, learning is important for improving one's quality of life: "*May ideya ka sa pagpapaunlad ng iyong buhay kapag nakapag-aral ka*" (You know how to improve your life if you have studied).

Vignette no 4

Early marriage and child-rearing responsibilities prevented Aling Rita of Magdalena from going to school. But she was able to learn the basic literacy and numeracy skills on her own and to improve these with the help of her children. She explains that at home, she practices reading and writing through comic books. She learned to compute and use these skills in counting her wages as a laundrywoman and determining the amount to be paid for her debts plus interest. The primary advantage she ascribes to being literate and numerate is: "*Matutong makatulong sa sarili at matutong makisama sa kapwa tao at sa lahat ng bagay*" (Ability to help oneself, adapt to others and to all things).

Vignette no 5

> Mang Carding from Lapu-Lapu is a middle-aged man of many skills: a carpenter, fisherman, electrician and sometime boxer. He was unable to go to school because he needed to help his father who was also a fisherman. His parents taught him to read. Since then, he has expanded his literacy skills by reading comics and whatever magazines are available, by listing and estimating cost of materials for carpentry jobs, in selling fish and other produce.

Vignette no 6

> KaKa Ferning from Corona is the present director of the communication program of the multi-sectoral people's organization in Corona. In his position, he is in charge of research, documentation of seminars, and production of the newsletter. He finished Grade II but left school without learning to read and write. He had to work for his uncle by tending carabaos. Sometimes, he would pass by the school and outside the window he would copy some words being taught to the schoolchildren and then practise reading and writing them at home. His mother taught him how to count and compute. When he joined the people's organization, he was forced to learn to read faster and understand more complex material so he could participate in the discussions. His skills greatly increased when he became a contributor to the newsletter and finally director of the communication program.

The conclusion is inescapable and almost commonsensical that for many people in the Philippine marginal communities, literacy, if learned in school, is incapable of sustaining and expanding itself when an individual drops out at an early grade, not only because of the lack of reading materials or the nature of community life, as already discussed, but because what had been learned in school has little or no relevance to actual activities in the community. In contrast, for those who became literate on their own (because of motivation and need) and *in situ*, as it were, no problem of irrelevance or lack of fit occurs; thus, an individual's literacy skills are sustained and expanded in and through literate practice.

Sustainability of Non-Formal Adult Literacy Programs

Non-formal adult education in the Philippines is very inadequately funded, and the Department of Education reports that they are able to serve only 1.07% of those needing non-formal basic education, including literacy (EDCOM Report, 1991).

In addition to these efforts, local NGOs, people's organizations and international agencies (e.g. UNICEF) also run some kind of adult literacy programs in relation to their organizational thrusts and objectives.

Given the performance of the elementary school system as detailed in the previous section, it would be fair to suppose that these efforts to provide non-formal adult basic education are meant to rectify or make up for what were not learned between Grades 1–4 in the formal system. In this situation, a vicious treadmill of literacy efforts at the formal and non-formal levels occurs.

The record of non-formal literacy and functional education programs, as shown in the various communities studied, is briefly summarized below. It includes not only a brief description of the progress but the views of some respondents who attended or knew about the program. The principal questions at this point would be on the participation and interest of the community folk and on the functionality of what they have learned for their own lives and the life of the community.

Boheh Umos, Tawi-Tawi

There are two non-formal literacy programs in Boheh Umos mainly attended by the land-based Sama. The government program is supposed to cover three levels but most of the time, the students reach only Level 1, that is, the teaching of the letter symbols and their sounds, and the formation of some words. Because of the lack of follow-up activity the program begins and ends at Level 1. The other program sponsored by an international agency focuses on health, nutrition and sanitation. These two programs involve basically the same target participants but there appears to be no coordination of efforts between them.

For those who participated in the non-formal literacy program, to be literate is to protect oneself from the dishonesty of opportunists in the market. They also said that if they are literate, they could vote for a candidate of their choice and not have somebody illegally mark their ballots for them.

Respondents said they are really interested in the non-formal literacy program but that it would be better to combine this with practical and profitable skills such as mat-weaving, sewing, and carpentry.

Kala, Ifugao

In 1990, a literacy/numeracy program was introduced in Kala, but after a few months it was stopped due to lack of funds and lack of interest on the part of the residents. In another *sitio*, literacy classes were also held, attended mainly by women. They were taught literacy/numeracy and livelihood/sanitation. Under the first component, they were taught the three Rs using the same method used in the handling of Grade I students. For the livelihood component, knitting, food processing and dressmaking were taught. They were also given information on health and sanitation. More people expressed interest in the livelihood program.

Respondents agree that a literacy program is necessary to help them achieve their needs and aspirations. They believe that more meaningful participation in community activities can only be achieved by becoming literate. They also say that literate people are more confident and better able to express themselves freely. For the parents, they feel that they would become better parents by being able to finally help their children with their assignments, thus commanding greater respect from them. Children of literate parents, they said, are more likely to perform better in school than those of illiterate parents.

For these reasons, the people expressed their desire to revive the literacy program. Their barangay council has already submitted a resolution asking the local education department to revive its NFE program in the area.

Alaga, Iloilo

Due to lack of teachers, there is no non-formal education program in Alaga. However, the people are looking forward to an adult education program to be conducted in their town. As of this writing, one government agency plans to initiate an adult literacy class in Alaga with an initial enrolment of 30 students. No program is being planned as yet for Alaga.

Sta. Rosa Refugee Camp, Pampanga

Residents of the camp felt strongly that, above all, development efforts should centre on the creation of a permanent resettlement site and in the provision of employment opportunities. There is a literacy program conducted by the Department of Social Welfare but there appears to be no interest in attending this program because, as people said, "We are already literate".

Taka, Lanao del Sur

There is a non-formal education program in the community conducted by a private sectarian (Protestant) college. But people are wary of this type of training program for fear of being Christianized. According to them, they are more interested in the government literacy program because they want to exercise their right to vote.

However, according to the respondents, there is a problem of attendance because women have to do household chores and the men have to work.

Magdalena, Negros Occidental

Conducted by an NGO, non-formal education in Magdalena started in January 1993. What is unique about this literacy-numeracy training is that it does not just produce graduates but also potential trainers for the propagation of the literacy program. This program is part of the NGO's project on education and production, conducted in co-operation with a foreign NGO.

Participants of the training program acknowledged that they learned the basic literacy and numeracy skills which are reading, writing, counting and computing, as well as the more task-oriented skills of budgeting and recording. Respondents say that their social awareness has been raised. They are now conscious about what is unfair and unjust in the management of the hacienda system, as well as the disadvantage of a monocrop agricultural system. Some pilot projects on diversified agriculture are now being done by the community folk.

Magdalena participants, armed with the skills they have learned from the training, aspire to find other income-generating activities that are more profitable. Some of them vow to help in literacy teaching by becoming para-teachers themselves. They also intend to inform those who have not yet participated in the training to attend and participate actively in the literacy-numeracy training.

They maintain that the training should be continued, and this time it should be supported by the government in order that the training program will be free from suspicion of being a Left-leaning activity.

Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu, Mindoro

The last non-formal literacy training program conducted in *barangay* Calamansi was in the 1950s. Adult education classes were held twice a week. We found one of the two surviving participants of the training. He said that he joined the literacy and numeracy program because he wanted to learn more. He also claims that his attendance in the training at age 18 taught him how to read, write, count and compute. But the program was stopped after a few months because of lack of teachers. Now, he laments the fact that he has reverted to illiteracy in writing and computation. His children now assist him when it comes to money matters.

Magayon, Sorsogon

Two literacy programs have been introduced so far in Magayon. The first is the government non-formal adult literacy program; the second was set up by an NGO in 1992. The first part of the NGO program offers basic literacy; the second part offers functional education linked with production. Since then, the program has produced 16 para-teachers, all coming from the community. To date, this program has been servicing 19 barangays and graduated more than a hundred students. At present, only the NGO program is ongoing.

Neo-literates claim that now they are able to participate more actively in community life by giving opinions, voting and joining community organizations; they have confidence and courage to travel alone and socialize; and they can engage in a little buying and selling business. They have likewise developed skills to participate in the political, social and economic life of their community.

When asked for skills learned in the functional education program, the respondents indicated reading, writing, counting and computing, and analysing. They also learned the following skills: planning of activities, proposing projects, report writing and documentation, budgeting, computing income and expenses or loss and gain from production, and new methods of agriculture production such as organic farming and seed production. They also consider themselves as having acquired more analytical and critical thinking skills. Likewise, they maintain that they have developed camaraderie among themselves.

As suggested by the participants themselves, for multiplier effect, the adult beneficiaries of the program should teach at least one other adult in the community. This recommendation is already being implemented because it means that basic and functional literacy will start in the home.

Labasan & Martires, National Capital Region

The strong sense of community organization in Sto. Rosario, Labasan made up for the absence of a literacy program. They have successfully negotiated with the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the local government regarding the status of their residence which changed them from being helpless squatters constantly under threat of demolition to amortizing land owners. They have also organized health programs and family planning seminars.

On the other hand, Martires has had no experience in negotiating with government authorities. In fact, most residents refused to join community organizations for fear of being noticed by the central government which would lead to a possible demolition of their houses.

Inipon, Quezon

Except for a program on basic nutrition and cooking for mothers which at one time was held in Inipon, there are no functional literacy programs in Inipon. But an educative process is going on among those who participate in activities spearheaded by the local radio station. These activities include: the post-office-on-the-air, the school on the air set up in 1977 and still ongoing, the hands-on participatory programming and production, and various programs designed to discuss issues and ventilate people's opinions on them.

The educative process is an integral part of the whole process of "community building" in which participation, mobilization and advocacy on local and national issues are the larger objectives. In this process, spearheaded by the local church, NGOs and various people's organizations, the priority issues are those directly related to local interests such as the campaign against illegal logging and fishing, recovery of a 300-hectare wetlands from illegal operators, campaigns against human rights violations, gambling and corrupt practices of local officials.

Corona, Rizal

There is no non-formal education program in Corona. However, as in Inipon, an educative process is going on in the context of the activities and thrusts of a multi-sectoral people's organization. Here the education process is also issue-based and it includes: meetings, seminars and training following the problem-posing approach of Freire (i.e. situation-analysis, identification of the problem, effects, solutions), mobilization, networking and advocacy.

The education process is part of a total communication program which includes research, education and documentation. Aside from print, other media used are drawings and illustrations (the area around the lake is home to many nationally known folk artists), musical compositions highlighting current issues relevant to the organization, and community theatre. Extensive use of local symbols, metaphors and sayings was reported.

To foster closer relations among the members as well as to generate income and to help in value formation, the projects also include 1) *ambag-buhay* (life-offering) in which members are encouraged to stop smoking, gambling and drinking; 2) *paluwagan*, a form of group saving in which the total monthly collection from the small group of about 8–10 goes each month to a member, on rotation basis; and 3) *pahulugan*, in which a household item or other substantial expense is bought by the organization and the member pays back on instalment at low interest rates.

Several lessons can be gleaned from this record of various non-formal education programs across the communities: 1) the importance of relating literacy to livelihood programs and economically oriented community activities, 2) recognition of the needs and aspirations of community folk as they themselves express these, 3) the need to coordinate and integrate education efforts within the community, 4) adopting a variety of methods and processes appropriate to adults and to the local culture, 5) the need to schedule literacy training in order for this not to interfere with livelihood activities, 6) continuous expansion of literacy activities in order that they become part of literate practice, 7) the importance of training para-teachers or future trainers from among the participants themselves, and 8) the importance of incorporating community knowledge into these programs.

From these examples and observations, it is possible to identify and elaborate on the elements of the concept of sustainability, the lack of which constrain the relation between literacy acquisition and development.

Transformation of Literacy into Literacy Practice

In our initial conceptualization of sustainability (chapter II), we proposed that its systematic elaboration should begin from an understanding of how literacy and its practice can reproduce, maintain and expand itself in the context of community life. On the basis of the data already presented, we are now able to frame this question more sharply. The principal question for sustainability is: How is literacy transformed into literacy practice?

We set aside the question of funds, recognizing that literacy programs to be put in place need some initial funding. The question, as framed above, is how literacy is reproduced, maintained and expanded in the community so that it becomes literacy practice.

This formulation is a departure from the current notion of *sustainability of literacy programs* in which one answer is putting more and more money into them.

At the level of individuals, the meaning of sustainability is on decreasing the possibility of loss of literacy skills and, conversely, in increasing the possibility of retention of these skills. In the previous section, both the quantitative data from the DECS study and the qualitative data from the present study show that retention is facilitated by motivation and need for these skills as well as their constant use and expansion in the context of the individual's day-to-day activities. The example of individuals who acquired literacy skills on their own and have also retained these affirms the simple conclusion that literacy is sustained by constant use in daily practice.

At the level of the group or community, sustainability acquires at least two meanings, all related to the rhythm of community life, as described earlier.

The first meaning has to do with the nature of the activities within the community itself. The second meaning has to do with the internal capacity of the community to generate change, to be discussed in the next section.

If we examine the reasons given by respondents on why they want to participate in literacy programs and what they have learned in that program, the answers vary across community types. More important, the activities that they enumerate vary according to the extent and nature of the literacy skills required by these activities.

Consider the following sets of activities reported in the preceding section:

Boheh Umos (land-based Sama):

> To compute accurately in order not to be taken advantage of
> To fill out a ballot for oneself
> Mat-weaving, sewing and carpentry

Kala:

> Knitting, food processing, dress making
> Help children with assignments

Sta. Rosa Refugee Camp:

No interest in literacy ("We are already literate.")
Need for (unspecified) employment opportunities
First concern is to be resettled

Taka:

To vote
Not interested in sectarian literacy program for fear of being Christianized

Magdalena:
Raise level of social awareness
Budgeting, recording
Understand what is unfair and unjust in the management of hacienda system
Find other income-generating activities
Become para-teachers in the literacy program
Recruit more participants to the literacy program

Magayon:

Read, write, count, measure, compute
Give opinions, participate in elections
Join community organizations
Use typewriter, vend or sell, have confidence to travel alone
More skills to participate in political, social, economic life of community
Critical analysis
Plan activities, propose projects
Write reports and do documentation work
Budget, compute income and expenses, loss and gain from production
Learn new methods of agriculture production such as organic farming and seed production
Develop camaraderie with one another
Teach literacy to at least one other adult in community
Become parateachers

Labasan:

- Negotiate with National Housing Authority for land
- Subdivide lots ("We are no longer squatters")
- Organize health programs and family planning seminars

Martires:

- No experience in negotiating with government authorities
- Refuse to join organizations
- Want to be "invisible" to avoid demolition

Inipon:

- Write letters to relatives and friends for post office-on-the-air
- Participate in school on the air
- Participate in programming and production in radio station
- Ventilate opinions on issues over the radio, orally or in writing
- Participate in mobilization and advocacy on local and national issues (e.g. illegal logging and fishing, corrupt government officials, etc.)

Corona:

- Participate in meetings and seminars
- Use problem-posing and problem-solving approach
- Participate in mobilization, networking and advocacy on local and national issues (e.g. degradation of Laguna Lake)
- Use and produce multi-media for communication (artwork, musical compositions about current issues, newsletter)
- Use community knowledge extensively in preparing communications
- Participate in organization's activities in income-generation, saving and value formation

Apart from affirming the close relation between the activities and the rhythm of community life as discussed earlier, the lists suggest dramatic differences not only in the literacy requirements of the activities but also in the integration of both oracy and literacy practice, the range of literacy and oracy skills required by the activities, and the exciting capacity of the community folk in some areas to indefinitely expand the nature and use of literacy skills for their own purposes.

In these senses we demonstrate the meaning of sustainability from the authentic voices of the community folk themselves: how literacy becomes literacy practice in the context of people's lives, and what it means to maintain, reproduce and expand literacy into literacy practice.

What are the possible explanations for these dramatic differences? One is the nature of the literacy program itself — whether limited in its objectives (literacy only or literacy-livelihood as in Boheh Umos, Kala), or in the expanded problem-posing and problem-solving mode (as in Magayon and Magdalena), or without a literacy program but within an educative process integral to the larger process of changing people's own life situations (as in Labasan, Inipon and Corona).

We have the contrary examples of Sta. Rosa to further confirm our assertions that with loss of community (Sta. Rosa) under disruptive circumstances, literacy practice is stunted perhaps only temporarily; and that of Martires to show that literacy and its practice occupies no important social space if people are afraid to be part of the process to take control of and change their life situation, preferring to remain "invisible" at the margins of social life.

Another explanation is the extent of people's participation in the literacy or education program (whether separate from or integral to a larger process of change). In the Philippine context, people's participation continues to be loosely and indiscriminately used. In the case of the literacy and education programs described above, it could mean 1) providing a literacy and livelihood program (as in Boheh Umos or Kala), or 2) giving people the chance to participate through choice of program content, schedules and so on, or 3) starting a generalized process of social awareness and community building after which people can take over more and more of the literacy program activities (as in Magdalena, Magayon and Inipon), or 4) when people decide for themselves (perhaps with initial help from catalysers such as NGOs and other agencies) to take their community and its problems in their own hands and work together to find their own solutions. It is in this last sense that Wignaraja's definition of development (given in chapter II) assumes its meaning: as a process of social transformation in which man is both the subject and the object, in which s/he participates at all levels of decision-making, in which self-reliance is developed and his/her creative energies are released, and in which growth, human development and equity are not trade-offs.

To be sure, this last form of people's participation is not without danger. Respondents in Magdalena propose the support of their literacy program by government in order that it will not be suspected as a Left-leaning activity. This is immediately understandable considering the presence of the New People's Army in the environs and continued military activity. Those in Martires prefer to remain quiet, unorganized and "invisible", if only to avoid demolition of their shanties. In this sense, the people of Martires are like the Sama in their withdrawal from external threat. But without the Sama cultural and social supports, they continue to remain vulnerable.

But the examples of Inipon and Corona demonstrate that people can together develop their own cultural and social supports (literacy practice included) and move forward, despite the *alon* (waves, symbolizing problems) which will surely include the opposition and repression of dominant groups who are threatened by the real possibility of the democratic transformation of marginalized communities.

Literacy Practice and the Creation of Social Space for Development

In our analysis of the passage of communities from an oral to a literate tradition, we postulated that apart from the development of individual capacity to abstract or objectify their knowledge from their practice, two other elements need to be present for this passage to become an ongoing process: 1) sustained attempts to integrate traditional and literate knowledge and to render these in written form; and 2) presence of a common social project to serve as focus of and integrating element in the whole process of the passage from an oral to a literate tradition.

In this connection, we are reminded of a question posed to us by a participant after completion of our functional literacy program: "Now that we have finished our FL classes, what is the next thing to do?" We had no answer and we did not know why we could not answer. From our present perspective and understanding, the answer from us could not be forthcoming because the next step is a decision that they had to take on whether or not they will create a social space for themselves in the mainstream, and by what means.

Thus, in analysing the constraints underlying the relation between literacy practice and development, we ask: What internal capacities for change and growth at the individual and group levels are generated by what types of literacy practice? Conversely, what social conditions need to be present in order that literacy practice can indefinitely expand to create for individuals and groups the social space for development?

We propose to answer both questions together in order to highlight the interactive, dialectical, non-linear relation between them.

Since Emile Durkheim, a central proposition that has guided the thinking and reflection of sociologists of education is the interactive relation between education and society. In this formulation, educational change (including literacy practice) is seen both as an important reflection of underlying changes in society and an active agent in the whole process of social change. The education process, including literacy education, while designed in many ways to maintain existing social arrangements, contains within itself the possibility of its own transformation as well as the transformation of that society in which it is an important part.

Within this dialectic, it is possible to locate the dynamic relation between literacy practice in various types of communities and the development process, as defined.

The instructive examples of B. V. Street (1987), while not denying the necessity for the development of technical literacy skills or of the cognitive aspects of reading and writing, alert us to the "significance of power, authority and social differentiation" in understanding both the transmission of literacy and its consequences for individual and social development.

In this study, by consistently taking the perspective of community folk as they live their lives within particular community types, we are never far from understanding the location of power and authority in the relation between human agency and existing social structures within and outside the community. Within this relation, it is possible to understand development as the processes by which individuals and groups create the social space within which they can become more fully human beings and communities. The notion of social space is here juxtaposed with marginality which is the characteristic common to all the communities in this study. For, to be at the margins is indeed to be unimportant, to have little or no space for growth, to "become small" as the Ita of Loob said after displacement from their Mt. Pinatubo environment.

In trying to answer the questions that we have posed, we identify as our first constraint the nature of the literacy and education program itself, whether structured as such or integral to a larger program of change. Here again we use as data the respondents' own voices, already adduced in the previous sections.

For many respondents in this study, their first encounter with literacy is equivalent to a rite of passage (chapter v), as the skill to decode or read information opens up possibilities for new activities hitherto off limits to them (e.g. to travel alone, to read street signs, to read anything one likes). More important, the skill to encode or write one's thoughts expands these possibilities even further (e.g. to write one's own letters, to fill out a ballot for oneself, to write one's own opinion on an issue and have it read on the air). What these skills do is to give an individual a voice and the confidence to use it in order to announce one's self, no longer to be unimportant and unknown at the margins. Thus, after acquiring the skill to read write and compute: "I can now join organizations;" "My children now respect me;" to compute accurately in order not to be taken advantage of; to participate in the political and social life of the community; "I have gained more self-confidence."

If there is a livelihood component to the literacy program, it then becomes possible to learn new skills (e.g. sewing, carpentry, knitting, food processing) where instructions could be read, understood, copied, even modified in due course.

Many literacy and education programs described in this study end here because that is the limit of their conception and objectives. The programs "deliver" skills for participants to use according to their best lights. Exacerbated by lack of funds and teachers, and unable to sustain the interest of more participants, the project itself soon ends. However, some programs (as in Martires and Sta. Rosa) also provide some minimal amount (e.g. P1,000 or US$40. in Martires) for participants to start livelihood projects. With luck, the project with little capital may prosper and here literacy practice also expands (e.g. recording, budgeting, computing income and expenses or loss and gain, learn new methods of agricultural production, plan activities), with the new skills and additional income creating more space for the previously marginalized individual and his/her family.

But more often, new problems come up, thus: "Where is the market for figurines," as in Sta. Rosa; "Where is the land on which I am free to try out my knowledge in agricultural production", as in Magayon and Magdalena.

Indeed, as the data show, literacy programs, by themselves, have the least chances of being sustained, followed by literacy–*cum*–livelihood programs where support systems for marketing, continuing capital generation, product refinement and so on are absent. In these instances, both the activities and the literacy practice related to these activities are not able to generate their own capacity to be reproduced and expanded. There is a limit, after all, to the number of unsold figurines that people can make, or the knowledge of agricultural production that could be imbibed without possibility of application on land which is not one's own. "The system is incomplete," as the Sta. Rosa respondents complained.

In Freire's model of the education process (Lankshear, in Mclaren and Leonard, 1993), the above-described type of literacy education program is only the first phase of the process. He calls it the literacy phase which is organized around words (generative words), in the best instances, words which resonate with the meanings of the participants themselves, and therefore able to generate other new words, new meanings, new literacy practice. But as Lankshear has pointed out, Freire's model has a second phase, a post-literacy phase in which "the ultimate text to be read and written is the world itself." To read the world is to confront it critically with one's own meanings; thus the approach is on generative themes or issues.

Four literacy-education programs (Magdalena, Magayon, Inipon, Corona) use this problem-posing process. As gleaned from the responses of participants, its first phase is consciousness-raising, thus: to raise the level of social awareness; "I now understand what is unfair and unjust in the management of the hacienda and the disadvantages of the monocrop system;" to do critical analysis; to ventilate opinions on local and national issues.

The new critical consciousness opens up not only possibilities for reflection and new texts (written by participants themselves) but also for action in an organized way, in a word, a praxis, thus: "to participate in mobilization and advocacy on illegal logging and fishing, against corrupt government officials, and degradation of the lake; to negotiate with the National Housing Authority for urban land; to organize health programs and family planning seminars." Even the expansion of the literacy-education program is attended to, thus: to become para-teachers, to teach literacy to another adult, to recruit more participants to the literacy programs, to produce a newsletter, to document training programs and seminars. The literacy practice is able to be reproduced and expanded, generating not only meanings but also the possibility of action.

At this point, the literacy and education program has the possibility to become part of a social project of the community, a part of the whole development process, as it were. And literacy practice expands with it.

But the data show that the development from consciousness raising to the social project does not always occur, and here the key consideration is the internal capacity of the community to generate change. This is a more complex process, more fraught with danger, signalling a direct confrontation or encounter with existing structures. Boheh Umos and Martires withdraw from the threat of a stronger armed group; the latter from the threat of demolition crews. Boheh Umos is more successful for reasons already given: the sea is large and bountiful, their households are with them, and the social organization of the *komkoman* is readily transformed into a *munda'an*, its set of rules known to and followed by all. The transitional communities of Kala and Alaga accommodate with varying success, thus the existence in Kala of co-operatives alongside more traditional forms, both of which are characterized by a certain form of communalism. Alaga pins its hopes on education preferably of the formal type, to be provided by outside agencies.

Sta. Rosa and Loob turn inward to family, even while awaiting external decisions on their resettlement, and increasingly becoming dependent on externally generated projects "developmental in intent but proven to be unsustainable and ineffective," as the Loob site report states. Taka remains ambivalent about its relations with the Christian majority and turns away from literacy programs perceived to proselytize. Palihan relies on strong family ties, family-based agribusiness and increasingly higher formal education levels for its children, all perceived to foster development of the family as a whole. Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu await externally generated projects (e.g. an ice plant, more employment opportunities, more farm-to-market roads), even as unemployment continues to rise.

Magdalena residents appear to have reached a level of critical consciousness but danger lies in transforming this into critical action for the feudal structure is well entrenched, agrarian reform is not a high priority in the national scheme of things, and military-rebel operations continue. Magayon has a relatively progressive program of government sought to be achieved through co-operation among government, NGOs and people's organizations. It would be interesting to see how this co-operation will turn out, even as the researchers on site have noted that control of business and politics remains firmly in the hands of a few. Inipon, with a long-running education program organized by a progressive church through its radio station, is building a community united around common issues.

Corona and Labasan (in a much more limited way) transform themselves into political formations with the education process integral to their development. Labasan has realized its second social project of obtaining urban land from the Housing Authority (the first being the opening of the service road so that they could avail of municipal services), and its residents now say, as a proclamation of their new identity and humanity: "We are no longer squatters." Other projects are meant to further improve the community itself, of which the most important for now are health and family planning. Corona has a thoroughgoing and extensive education program integral to its major social projects which are: to stem the degradation of the lake because of industrial waste and indiscriminate practices by big operators, and to find common cause with all small fisherfolk in the country. These social projects have not been without cost, including human lives, but this is not within the scope of the present study.

From these examples, we can see that in the Philippine context, the internal capacity of a marginal community to generate and sustain change may come in at least three forms: 1) accommodation of new forms of social organization (e.g. co-operatives) particularly where it shares some common characteristics with the old traditional social organization; 2) intensifying family relations and expanding family-based activities; and 3) transforming a natural social formation into a political issue-based formation. A fourth form, co-operation among government organizations, non-government organizations and people's organizations (GO-NGO-PO), is proposed in Magayon but it is too early to tell where this will go. This early, however, it is fair to say that much will depend on the internal capacity of the people's organizations to write their own text, as it were, and to be critical of the texts that others propose to write for them to accept.

In all these forms, education and literacy practice occupy an important place but this is not the same as saying that literacy practice and education lead to development.

The data suggest that the first form, accommodation, incorporates the least self-generated literacy practice, particularly where the direction of the accommodation is incorporation into existing practices which are largely oral, as in Kala. In the example earlier given (the trial of attempted rape), it will be noted that the only written documentation was the agreement of both parties after the trial. In the case of livelihood skills (e.g. knitting, food processing), literacy practice is minimal. Where the direction of accommodation is external (e.g. as in Alaga with formal or non-formal education for children and adults), much depends on whether or not the external provisions are forthcoming.

The second form, intensified family-based activities and increasingly high levels of formal education at least for the children, is the principal modality now obtaining in many communities in the country. This explains in part not only the great desire for education of whatever type at all levels but also the sometimes extreme family-orientedness of Philippine society. Many social analysis focus on this family-orientedness and sometimes mistake it for high communality but this is not exactly accurate. For one thing, the importance of conflict mediators belies communality, highlighting instead the closed family coming in conflict with other families of the same orientation. Studies on national identification (cf. Doronila, 1989) suggest that the problem of developing national unity is accounted for, in part, by the inability to transcend family and self interests for those of the local and national community. Literacy practice in this modality is heavily influenced by level of formal education.

The third form, the transformation of a natural social formation into an issue-based political formation, is a relatively new development, a modality generated by and integral to the rise of the popular movement in the country in which progressive groups in the church, schools, in the small business sector, NGOs and mass organizations (POs) (e.g. women, tribal Filipinos, peasants, labour, students, etc.) rapidly developed and expanded, with or without connections to the underground rebel groups (MNLF, NPA/NDF).

The impetus for organizing, conscientization and re-orientation came from various sources, among others: Vatican II and then liberation theology, the rise of Islamic unity, the revival and revitalization of the Communist Party in the Philippines, the worldwide student movement. In this process of transformation, the education (and literacy) process has been strongly influenced by the ideas of Paulo Freire, among others.

As the data suggest, the education process almost wholly conducted in the local language and/or Filipino is explicitly political, firmly imbedded in and integral to the transformation from a social to a political formation. Thus, its internal capacity for generating and expanding literacy practice is derived from 1) the internal capacity of the new formation to maintain its focus while expanding its objectives and activities (e.g. from the issue of the degradation of the lake to the situation of small fisherfolk in the country); 2) its capacity to protect itself from co-optation and repression; 3) to continue to be the authentic voice of the people it represents; and 4) to maintain the democratic and collective modality of its decision-making processes.

The fourth and new form, GO-NGO-PO co-operation, still to be tried out in practice, has its basis in the ongoing peace process and in the observation that NGOs appear to be able to deliver services more quickly and more efficiently than the bureaucracy, and understandably, have closer links to people's organizations. Here the issues of sharing power and authority as well as the general problem of equitable distribution will become central.

We have shown in this analysis that in the present Philippine context, the relation of literacy practice and development is complex and dialectical, not unilinear. The major constraints in this relation are shown to be as follows: 1) the nature of the literacy and education program itself which may or may not lead to sustainability in the sense of the reproduction and expansion of literate practice; and 2) the internal capacity of a marginal community to generate and sustain a development process that will help them to create a social space in the mainstream.

The first constraint is externally generated, and it has to do with the limits of change and development as envisioned by policy makers and dominant groups. The second constraint is internally generated, and it has to do with the decisions that people in a community must make for themselves in creating their own social space for development within the mainstream.

In the variety of people's responses to these constraints, it is clear that the relation between literacy and development cannot be reduced to the simple formulation that literacy leads to development.

CHAPTER VII

The Possibilities for Literacy in Conceptualizing a School of the People

THIS BOOK, AS WELL AS the research that went before it, is not only an academic exercise or a study in aid of policy and program development. It is first of all an attempt to present and interpret as faithfully as possible the voices and life-texts of communities of people living in the margins of Philippine society, the silent and numerous objects of many development programs and literacy campaigns. Who are these people?

If we add up the official figures on basic and functional illiteracy given in the first chapter, the total is 18 million, or fully 37% of our population, "a nation of fifth graders" as Professor Cortes sharply puts it.

Clearly, such figures demand a serious consideration of the way we educate our people at least at the levels of literacy and basic education.

The Jomtien Document recommends a framework of Education For All, affirming the right of everyone to a basic education. The Philippine response to this worldwide call has been to put more money into basic education and to revitalize non-formal adult literacy and functional education. The research program of which this study was a part, commissioned by the Literacy Coordinating Council of the Philippines, was explicitly for the improvement of the design and delivery of the latter. Yet, it is clear from this and previous studies (cf. Cortes, 1992; Report of the Congressional Commission on Philippine Education, 1991) that the problem is not alone the inefficient delivery of adult education services; it is also the delivery of formal basic education up to at least Grade 6.

In this study, we have tried to show the close connection between these two sectors in the vicious treadmill of literacy efforts that persists, where students who drop out of elementary school eventually become the target participants of non-formal literacy and basic education program. We have known this for a long time but we have not thought to ask the objects of our concern and anxiety what kind of education will help them find a space for themselves in our society, what kind of school of the people will serve the people.

In this book is their answer, and we hope we have interpreted their voices and their meanings correctly.

Lessons from the Study

In our effort to approach the question of literacy from the people's perspective, we designed a methodology (chapter II) that builds upon and expands on the standard methods of ethnographic research. This methodology, we believe, not only allows for comparison across communities, a matter of interest to field researchers; but it also immediately engages community folk to directly participate through a dialogical process in a comprehensive needs assessment, firmly anchored on their activities, problems, needs, skills requirements, views on development projects that are good for them, their aspirations and finally their actual literacy practice. The result is a negotiated and consensual analysis of community life and literacy practice, as well as enough information that could already be used as a starting point for the design of a literacy and education program that community folk themselves could help to set up, implement and manage.

The feasibility of such a methodology for both academic research and program development purposes has been demonstrated in this study across several marginal communities of various types, for considerably less money than would be spent for the standard literacy mapping (to find the illiterates) used at present in the Philippines and other countries similarly situated.

In this process of studying variations of community life (chapter III), we have as well developed and used a typology of marginal Philippine community types in which the principal elements of variation are: 1) the nature of the social relations among the community members, 2) the processes of continuity or change characterizing the life of the community, and 3) the specific community activities in the three aspects of livelihood-economic, socio-cultural and political-civic. These three elements, in summary, characterize the social organization within each community type which in our view gives us our first basis for understanding not only the context of literacy practice but also 1) the capacity of community folk to do things together (such as setting up a literacy program), 2) what community problems need the most urgent attention, 3) what aspects of community activities are perceived by the community to have the best chances of immediately benefitting from education and development efforts, 4) what processes of developmental change are already at work within the community, 5) how may these be helped along, and 6) what are the constraints along the way. This information is also important for purposes of program development.

A closer examination of the community activities (chapter v) across community types gives us our second basis for understanding the context of literacy practice and the various factors which help to determine the practice, meanings and uses of literacy. For research and program development purposes, this analysis gives some insights on 1) the interrelations of technology, knowledge and memory in production activities, 2) the relation between literacy and oracy practice depending upon the nature of the social organization, 3) the negative and positive social meanings attached to literacy practice, and 4) the relation of literacy practice and people's participation in political-civic activities. This kind of understanding, in general, gives us not only some practical ideas on how to design programs which expand literacy practice (given in chapter v) but alerts us as well to the factors and the forces which constrain the expansion of literacy practice (e.g. inaccessibility and inappropriateness of reading materials; exclusion from available knowledge due to social stratification, minority-majority relations, use of a foreign language tied to social meanings of prestige, status and religion; dichotomy of literacy construed as leisure activity and work).

The usual conceptualization of the possible content of literacy and development programs begins with the determination of what people do not know so that it can be "given" to them. In this study, we have departed from this view, given the understanding that it is precisely the inaccessibility of literate knowledge (including the language in which it is encoded), among others, that has contributed to the marginalization of people.

Instead, what we have done (chapter IV) is first to sketch the historical background for the understanding of how community knowledge in the process of colonization became two separate streams of traditional and literate knowledge, and how the introduction of a new script, confounded with other social elements that went with it (i.e. new languages, knowledge, property relations, language policy), have contributed to this separation.

When young people enter the formal school system, the invalidation of community knowledge becomes complete, confronted as they are with new knowledge whose validity is established by the fact that it comes in print, and it is the subject of the evaluation (examination). All previous non-school knowledge not found in the text are summarily dismissed as superstition.

But hundreds of sayings reported across the sites give practical advice: on wind direction, weather and good fishing practices, on correct planting methods and preventing soil depletion, on extensive herbal lore, on good nutrition especially for nursing mothers and children, on family planning, on interpersonal relations.

Since almost none of this knowledge is to be found in the printed text, the possibility of revaluation and reconciliation with textbook or current knowledge is lost.

For example, gender equality has pre-colonial roots in the Philippines and it survives to this day: in this study, the men and women of the Ita of Zambales are reported to work side by side in the fields, and the right of women to be heard in the traditional court is upheld by the Ifugao; descent is still reckoned bilaterally everywhere in the Philippines and gender equality is symbolized graphically in the myth of the first man and woman coming from a split bamboo.

The concept of a sustainable agriculture is found in the rice terracing system which has been in continuous use since long before pre-colonial times, and everywhere Filipino schoolchildren sing *Bahay Kubo* (My Nipa Hut) which contains the detailed prescription for all the plants which should be found in an ecologically sound, diversified Filipino home garden complete with nitrogen-fixing legumes. Unfortunately, while this song continues to be sung and assiduously copied in children's notebooks, the prescriptions are ignored. And to date, we are just beginning an extensive scientific study of the rice terraces in the Cordillera.

In order to begin this process of re-valuation, we analysed people's knowledge, whether in the traditional or literate mode, as they themselves have reported it. The method we have designed for retrieving and recording this knowledge is simple and easily usable for purposes of developing content for a literacy program which should begin with what people already know and use. We analysed people's knowledge in the different community types in order to understand not only the content of the two bodies of community knowledge, the relation between them, if any, and attempts of community folk to gain control over their knowledge by integrating the best features of these two bodies of knowledge into an integrated body of usable knowledge which they can use in their passage from an oral to a literate tradition. We can begin this process of integration using the modalities already created by the community folk themselves: 1) the use of their own language, 2) consistently encouraging literate practice, 3) combining both traditional and literate knowledge into new forms, 4) coining new word-combinations to express new concepts, 5) attempting to incorporate the characteristics of their oral expression into the written mode, and 6) seeing to it that even the mode of producing their own text is under their control by using only whatever technology is available to them.

In recent years, we have noted the popularity of research on indigenous or "ethno" knowledge since a new realization has come about that we can in fact learn from the largely oral and undervalued knowledge of people hitherto considered "backward". This is especially true of concepts in such areas as the environment and its sustainability which spring from the awareness of the interconnectedness of all form of existence; and in the new popularity of herbal medicine, among others. This is of course a welcome development, although here we voice a concern that when this knowledge enters the realm of formalized abstract knowledge, such formalization may render people's knowledge again inaccessible to them.

For this reason, we have studiously avoided the use of the term "indigenous knowledge", and all that it implies, preferring instead to retrieve people's community knowledge, that knowledge which informs their daily lives and which gives these lives their meanings.

By using it as the first but not the only basis of the content of their own literacy and education programs, we ensure that their knowledge remains firmly in their own hands, to analyse, to use, to modify, even to discard as they write the history of their own lives. The examples of Inipon and Corona are excellent proofs of both the process and outcomes of retrieval and creative change.

The reasonableness of such a view is demonstrated in our examination of retention, loss and acquisition of literacy (chapter VI) where the relation between retention of literacy skills (once learned) and the use of these skills in daily living is simple and straightforward. Those who learned their skills in school (which in the Philippine setting purveys knowledge generally irrelevant to daily life) lose these skills for lack of opportunity to use them in their daily activities.

Those who retain these skills ascribe retention to: 1) involvement in community activities where literacy skills are practised and new ones are learned; 2) continuous application of these skills, and 3) expansion of these skills because their work and other community activities require these. Moreover, our data show that none of the individuals who learned literacy skills on their own, in their home language or in Filipino, and because they needed these skills for their daily activities have reverted to illiteracy. These examples were of course not meant to show that people should be left to learn literacy skills on their own, for indeed, their own accounts show how difficult the process was for them. It is simply to demonstrate that literacy skills once learned need to be transformed into literacy practice in order for them to be retained and expanded.

In fact, this insight has led us to again depart from the current formulation that the concept of sustainability is tied only to the sustainability of literacy programs *per se*. We have reformulated the concept of sustainability at a more general level: sustainability is first of all understood as the transformation of literacy skills into literacy practice (chapter VI).

At the level of individuals, the meaning of this new conception of sustainability is on decreasing the possibility of loss of literacy skills and conversely on increasing the possibility of retention and expansion of literacy skills by relating these very closely to skills required by their daily activities. At the level of the community, the meaning of this new conception of sustainability is tied first, to the nature of the activities within the community itself (depending on community type as already analysed) and second, to the internal capacity of the community to generate change.

With respect to the first meaning, our data, utilizing almost verbatim the community folks' own statements, show the dramatic differences across communities, not only in the literacy requirements of the community activities themselves but also 1) in the integration of both oracy and literacy practice, 2) the varying ranges of literacy and oracy skills required by different types of activities, and most important of all, 3) the exciting capacity of community folk in some areas to indefinitely expand the nature and use of literacy for their own purposes. The contrary examples from the uprooted disaster communities affirm that with loss of community (and therefore of normal community activities), literacy practice is stunted, but perhaps only temporarily.

With respect to the second meaning of sustainability which is tied to the internal capacity of the community to generate change, we found that the transformation of literacy skills to literate practice must be analysed and understood in the context of the development process itself.

The concept of development has perhaps as many meanings as there are projects designed to "develop" people. In this study, we have limited our meaning of development to that which involves a process of social transformation in which 1) men and women are placed at the centre of development; 2) their creative and powerful potential to participate meaningfully in the entire development process is assumed; and 3) it is recognised that social change starts with the way people themselves respond to the forces governing social transformation (chapter II).

Using Freire's model of the education process, we traced the route of individuals and groups, from the acquisition of literacy skills and its consequences for them (as reported in their own words), up to the point where these literacy skills have the possibility of being maintained and expanded in the community itself through a social project in the development mode, as defined.

We have found that Freire's model is a useful way of classifying literacy and education programs, as well as of characterizing the sequential consequences of literacy in individuals. The first phase, involving the reading and writing of generative words, in its best instances, is truly a rite of passage, opening up new possibilities for expressing and encoding new meanings with corresponding increase in the individual's level of confidence. If this phase includes a livelihood component, new work skills are learned as well as new literacy skills, further expanding practice "to write their own texts," as it were.

Our data show that literacy programs *per se* have the least chances of being sustained, followed by literacy-cum-livelihood programs where support systems such as marketing, continuing capital generation, and product refinement are absent.

The second phase of the model involves a post-literacy phase which in some quarters has been interpreted to mean that phase in which the new literacy skills will now be applied to more comprehensive issues (e.g. deforestation, the health situation) using material developed by experts. In a limited way this is correct, but Freire's meaning of the post-literacy phase has a considerably sharper edge than this. When he proposes that "the ultimate text to be read and written is the world itself", it is understood to mean that the confrontation with the world is in terms of one's own critical meanings born out of a conscientization process; a juxtaposition of one's real situation, as well as that of the community, with the forces in the local, national or global levels which have contributed, in the first place, to the creation and maintenance of that situation. The possibility of praxis, in the context of organized action, is thus opened up. In our research, four literacy-education programs are in this mode, but participants have responded to this possibility in different ways.

We have found that the transition from the literacy phase to the post-literacy phase does not always occur because this complex process involves a direct confrontation with the power and authority which maintain existing structures.

This is where our notion of the marginal community's internal capacity to generate change processes can be empirically studied. From our data we have found varying levels of internal capacity. Excluding those groups which appear to have opted to withdraw from the process of change, we have found that the internal capacity of a marginal community to generate and sustain change may come in at least three forms: 1) accommodation of new forms of social organization particularly where it shares some common characteristics with the old traditional social organization; 2) intensifying family relations and expanding family-based activities; and 3) transforming a natural social formation into a political issue-based formation. A fourth form is emerging, involving co-operation among government organizations, NGOs and people's organizations or GO-NGO-PO, but it is too early to tell where this will go.

The third form of internal capacity to generate change processes conforms most closely to Freire's conception of the post-literacy phase. Indeed, in the communities where this is to be found, this capacity is also manifested in an ever expanding literacy practice derived in a dialectical way from the internal capacity of the new social formation 1) to maintain its focus while expanding its objectives and activities, 2) to protect itself from co-optation and repression, 3) to continue to be the authentic voice of the people it represents, 4) to maintain the democratic and collective modality of its decision-making processes.

In these senses, the social organization or community itself becomes a school of the people, a learning community where literacy and education as well as social participation, mobilization and advocacy for reform are integrated towards the singular and continuing project of enabling people to move from the margins of society to a social space in the mainstream which they have created and helped to transform for themselves. Such a school could be encouraged to flourish with help from various well-intentioned sectors. The example of the community where a radio station is helping to build unity around common issues demonstrates the help that catalysts for education and reform could give. There is no reason to think that government-sponsored programs could not achieve the same results on a larger scale, as long as these programs are not meant only to domesticate people's values and to use their skills for programs that deny their own aspirations.

Postscript

WE BEGAN THIS WORK BY PROPOSING to validate two major implicit assumptions underlying current efforts in literacy work: 1) whether or not literacy skills in the population lead to literacy practice; and 2) whether or not literacy leads to development. We have found that the unilinear and even sometimes causal relations embedded in these formulations are not entirely accurate. In the Philippine context, we have been able to describe and analyse in a preliminary way the nature of these relations as well as the factors that contribute to the complexity and dialectical nature of the relations. In the Appendix, we include some preliminary quantitative data and analysis confirming and elaborating on these relations.

We end this book with a question, not entirely academic, that may well be put to us by those whom we seek to make literate: Are we ready for the consequences to us that the authentic literacy of a conscienticized marginalized people will bring?

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APPENDIX

Quantitative Data and Analysis

THE QUALITATIVE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY are supported by very preliminary quantitative evidence on cultural dimensions affecting work and literacy, as well as levels of thinking of respondents.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the quantitative study were: 1) to integrate the individual and social consequences of literacy, and relate literacy practice to the world of work and productivity; 2) to document the multi-cultural nature of the Philippine socio-cultural context, and to validate the necessity of a typology of marginal communities; 3) to provide a quantitative analysis of performance of respondents on the tests and questionnaires in the different research sites; and 4) to analyse and refine the four literacy tests: that used by the Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), two Literacy Mapping tests used by the National Statistics Office (NSO), and the Education Forum (EF) literacy-numeracy test.

Methodology

Four literacy tests namely, FLEMMS, NSO (Forms 3 and 3A), and EF Literacy and Numeracy tests were administered to a purposive sample of respondents in the sites.

Two sets of questionnaires were administered: the first was on work attitudes, entrepreneurship, aspirations and self concept; the second was adapted from the multi-cultural study of Hofstede.

Data from nine research sites were included. These are two urban poor areas (Labasan and Martires), two lowland farming communities (Magayon), an upland farming community (Kala), a fishing and farming community (Calamansi and Lapu-Lapu), a monocrop farming community (Magdalena), a lowland farming and lake fishing community (Taka), and an upland farming community (Alaga). To serve as a comparison group, university undergraduate and graduate students were asked to participate. In all, there were 371 respondents (115 males and 220 females; 36 did not indicate their gender (31%, 59.3% and 9.7, respectively).

Limitations

Since the sample was drawn purposively, the study is not representative of the whole Philippines. This study is focused on marginal urban and rural communities. Researchers came from a variety of disciplines and experimental controls were not possible because of time and travel constraints. However, it still provides us with an opportunity to demonstrate in quantitative form the multicultural nature of Philippine society along selected aspects. This was done in order to understand the ways in which cultural groups in the Philippines differ, and to relate literacy practice to the world of work and productivity.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the Performance of Respondents on Literacy and Numeracy Tests

Using the SOLO taxonomy (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes) developed by Biggs and Collis (1982), responses were categorized into prestructural, unistructural, multistructural, relational and extended abstract. These categories are descriptive of the levels of structure embedded in responses on the EF literacy and numeracy tests.

Majority of the respondents are at the unistructural and multistructural levels in literacy, except for Calamansi/Lapu-Lapu and Kala where 20% and 33% respectively are performing at the extended abstract level; 60% and 18% respectively are at the relational level. In other words, these two (2) groups performed better than the rest of the sampled communities.

On numeracy, majority of the respondents are at the unistructural and multistructural levels of performance, but a larger number from

Magdalena and Alaga are performing at the highest numeracy level or extended abstract level.

Both urban and rural communities do better at functional numeracy than at functional literacy, as long as the content is directly relevant to their daily lives.

Cultural Dimensions According to Hofstede

Four cultural dimensions were reported by Hofstede: 1) uncertainty avoidance (UAI) based on three indicators: orientation to rules, employment stability and level of stress in the workplace, 2) individualism vs. collectivism (IDV) which is self explanatory, 3) masculinity-femininity (MAS) where the former is centred on assertiveness while the latter is on nurturance, and 4) power distance (PDI) which is a measure of the difference in interpersonal power or influence between the supervisor and their subordinates, as viewed by the latter.

According to Hofstede (1983), the Philippines is weak on uncertainty avoidance (44), has a collectivist and masculine orientation (32 and 64, respectively) and a very high power distance (94). His study compared the Philippine data with data from forty (40) countries. He gave the Philippines a single score for each of the four dimensions.

Our contention in this study is that these communities are culturally different from each other. We shall describe below how these differences exist along the different communities in this study.

1. There is very weak uncertainty avoidance among undergraduate and graduate students, urban poor communities, Kala, Calamansi/Lapu-Lapu, and Magayon. In Alaga and Magdalena, UAI is weak but in Taka, it is moderate at 67.
2. All research sites (except Kala) are more individualist than collectivist in orientation, contrary to the popular notion of communality among Philippine groups.
3. All sites are more "nurturing" than "aggressive" with Kala as the most nurturing among the urban and rural marginal communities.

4. Urban poor communities, Magdalena, and Alaga registered very high power distance indices of 95, 93, and 92, respectively. However, undergraduate and graduate students reported a low power distance of 23 and 39, respectively. All the rest had moderate power distance indices.

Performance on the Psychosocial Scales

In order to summarize data from the responses to the two questionnaires, factor analysis was performed. Research site turned out to be the most important variable for the performance of respondents on these scales. Four factors were identified from Hofstede's questionnaire on cultural dimensions affecting work. They are: work environment, job motivators, tension/time/ freedom and working relationships. Four factors were also identified from the questionnaire on work attitudes and self concept. They are: positive work attitudes, coping with barriers to success, flexibility/listening and directive management style. These are discussed below.

Cultural Dimensions Affecting Work

Work environment includes items on co-operation, working in a desirable area, having a clear description of one's job, and having a clean work place. The group with low scores on work environment comes from Alaga. All the means from the other communities are not significantly different from each other.

Job motivators include items on value for advancement, being consulted by one's boss, variety and challenge in one's job, and contributing to the development of one's group. The highest mean is from the graduate and undergraduate students and the group from the urban poor communities. The low group includes the community from Alaga, Magayon and Magdalena.

Tension/time/freedom include items on remaining on the job, freedom to use easier methods of doing a job, having personal time, working in a large group, and tension in one's job. The highest group on this factor is the community from Taka and the lowest group is the graduate and undergraduate students. The rest of the communities comprise the middle group.

Working relationships include items like afraid to disagree with one's superiors, obedience to rules, stress in one's job, good working relationships with the boss and the belief that most people want to work. The highest means are the two groups from Magayon and the group from Calamansi/Lapu-Lapu. The lowest mean came from the group in Taka. The rest comprised the middle group.

Preferences and Descriptions of Supervisors

Four types of management styles were described by Hofstede: authoritarian, paternalistic, consultative, and participative. Wide discrepancies are reported on preferred and actual management styles across the nine communities.

The total sample of respondents described their supervisors as 11.4% authoritarian, 24% paternalistic, 25% consultative and 40% participative. At Labasan, an urban poor community, 46% of the supervisors are described as participative. The same is true of Calamansi/Lapu-Lapu (57%), and the Magayon communities (46 and 61%). In Magdalena where social organization is still feudal, paternalistic supervisors are the most common at 37% and the rest of the supervisors are spread evenly over the three categories. The undergraduate and the graduate students describe their current supervisors as conservative (36 and 33%, respectively), but there is a spread in the other three categories. At Martires, the consultative supervisors are most common at 36% but participative supervisors are a close second at 28%.

Some communities are bimodal in their descriptions of their current supervisors. In Kala, the descriptions of current supervisors are split at 37% paternalistic and 37% participative. At Taka, 46% are paternalistic and 47% are described as consultative.

In the traditional culture of Kala, people want and trust the paternalistic and participative style of supervision. Undergraduate and graduate students and respondents from Taka prefer consultative leadership. Respondents from Calamansi/Lapu-Lapu and Magayon prefer participative leadership.

Work Attitudes and Self Concept

From the questionnaire on work attitudes and self concept, four factors were also identified. These four summarized the 42 items of the questionnaire. To reiterate, these factors are: positive work attitudes, coping with barriers to success, flexibility/listening and directive management style.

Positive work attitudes includes items like: doing one's best, finishing a task once it is started, enjoying leadership role, and observing better ways of doing something. Alaga was lowest on positive work attitudes. The other research communities are not significantly different from each other.

Coping with barriers to success includes items like: having a focus on goals, difficult to win friends, having new ideas, and fear of taking risks. The urban poor communities, Martires and Labasan, were lowest on coping with barriers to success. The high group includes Taka, and the university graduate and undergraduate students.

Flexibility/listening includes items on the perception of a crisis in authority, viewing the critic as an enemy, fear of failure and losing hope when rejected. An urban poor community, Labasan, was highest on flexibility. Alaga and Martires were lowest.

Directive management style includes items on the need for detailed instruction, listening to people, directive management, and having two bosses. The graduate and undergraduate students were highest on this factor and Taka and Alaga were the lowest.

The significant differences across research sites do confirm our contention that the Philippines is a culturally diverse population requiring context-specific education programs. The main findings of this qualitative study are integrated throughout, and in particular in chapter IV.

Figure 5: Correlations of UAI with work relations and coping with barriers to success

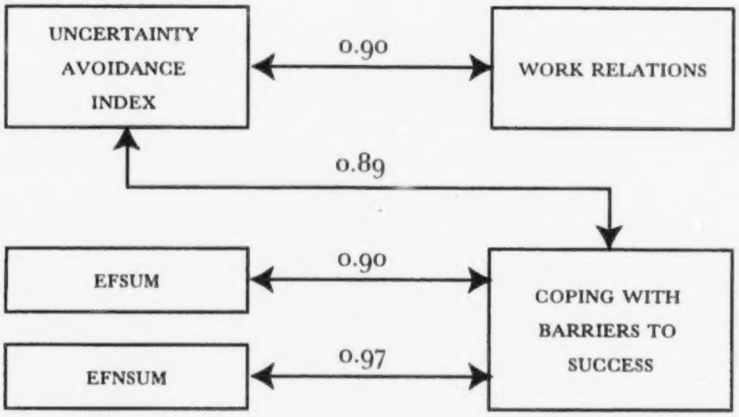
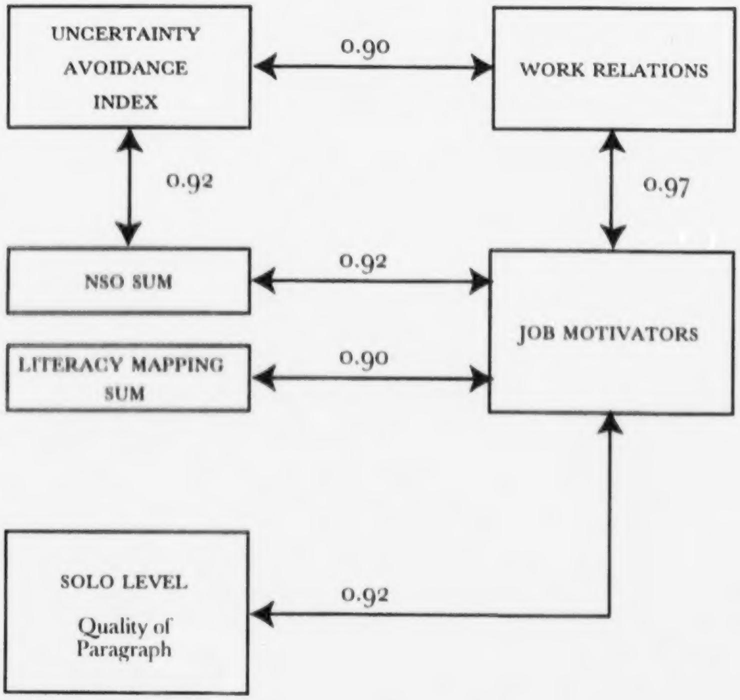

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE INDEX
0.90
WORK RELATIONS
0.89
EFSUM
0.90
COPING WITH BARRIERS TO SUCCESS
EFNSUM
0.97

Figure 6: Correlations of UAI with work relations and job motivators


UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE INDEX
0.90
WORK RELATIONS
0.92
0.97
NSO SUM
0.92
JOB MOTIVATORS
LITERACY MAPPING SUM
0.90
SOLO LEVEL
Quality of Paragraph
0.92

Summary

We have seen the association between literacy and the development of the community which led to the common formulation that: if literate, the person would be better developed, without understanding the mediating variables for development. Now we have evidence for some of the possible mediating variables of this formulation. They are: the ability to cope with barriers to success, positive work attitudes and job motivators. All these variables are positively related to literacy. Thus, it is correct to say that literacy is indeed a tool. If the community's cultural life requires literacy, higher levels of literacy will in fact develop because people need it in their daily lives. But development of the community itself precedes this process. Unless the community can sustain this development, literacy by itself would have little impact.

What does it mean to be functionally literate? How can literacy be measured? And does it invariably promote development? This book examines such questions in the context of six types of marginal Philippine community, ranging from island fishing people to upland farmers and rice cultivators. It demonstrates that the concepts of literacy and numeracy cannot be separated from their social and cultural settings and that standard measures of literacy used in industrialized countries are often inappropriate.

As well as being a richly fascinating ethnographic study, the book has important implications for the design of community literacy programmes.

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